

Fleet Focus

THE most fleeting of glances at our map shows you where

the Royal Navy's principal effort is at present.

But we're not going to begin our round-up in the Gulf. Nope, we're starting our panorama of all things RN in the cooler, damper surroundings of Prestwick in Scotland.

No Search and Rescue unit has been busier in this past quarter

century than **HMS Gannet** whose Sea Kings scrambled on average once every day in 2007 (see page 5).

Elsewhere, the Arabian Gulf remains the focal point of RN/RFA

activity.

Nine major floating assets can be found in and around Gulf waters, plus three squadrons, and the Royals of 539 ASRM.

Frigate **HMS Argyll** has just handed over duties in the northern Gulf to **HMS Campbeltown** (see page 5), while survey ship **HMS** Enterprise continues to collect data to update the waters'

navigational charts (see page 15).
Iraqi sailors and marines are increasingly taking responsibility for protection of their own waters under the watchful eye of the

Naval Transition Team (see pages 5 and 13-14).

Also in the Gulf, but attached to the US Navy, is the Busy Bee: HMS Manchester has been 'riding shotgun' for the American

carrier Harry S Truman (see page 6).

Several hundred miles away, the other core effort by the RN is in the sands of Afghanistan, where the Royal Marines of 40 Commando launched their first amphibious raid in the country (see pages 22-23). Overhead, the Naval Strike Wing (see page 11) and 846 NAS continue to provide constant support.

Not content with being at the heart of these two UK commitments, the RN is leading a 13-ship-strong deployment east of Suez, Orion 08 (see page 4). The task group, headed by HMS Illustrious, comprises HM Ships Edinburgh (also our ship of the month – see page 12), Westminster and Trafalgar, plus RFA Wave Knight, Fort Austin, Diligence and Bayleaf. Attached at times to the force will be HMS Chiddingfold and Atherstone, USS Cole, Spain's SNS Mendez Nunez and France's FS Jean Bart.

With all these ships and units committed across the globe, considerable spiritual and medical support is constantly needed. We take a look at the role of chaplains and ships' doctors on a major deployment on page 5.

The desert and mountains of the Sierra Nevada beckoned for

3 Commando Brigade Reconnaissance Force who conducted training in an extreme environment alongside American counterparts (*turn to page 20*).

The RFA's new Bay-class support ships are being thrust

increasingly into the front line. Largs Bay bagged drug runners in the Caribbean (see right), while Cardigan Bay is replacing the venerable Sir Bedivere in the northern Gulf (see page 7).

Our 'cover star' HMS Endurance is helping British Antarctic Survey scientists study climate change by boring into the frozen continent (see the centre pages).

North of Endurance, destroyer HMS Nottingham has been conducting exercises off West Falkland with local infantry and RAF units (see page 10).

There are cold waters ahead, too, for **HMS Roebuck** (command ship) and minehunter **HMS Hurworth** with a NATO task group in the Baltic (see page 5).

Two iconic river crossings provided the stunning backdrops for **HMS Gloucester** (the Forth Rail Bridge) and **HMS Westminster** (Tower Bridge) as the former emerged from an overhaul and the

latter visited the capital (see opposite).

HMS Exeter could also be found in London, attending the

city's annual boat show (see right).

Also in home waters, sister frigates HMS Portland, Northumberland and Richmond finally returned to the UK following deployments to the West Indies, Mediterranean and Gulf respectively (see page 4).

And finally, apologies in advance for an entire page devoted to

Crab Air (page 38). We promise not to do it again.

Per ardua ad Astro

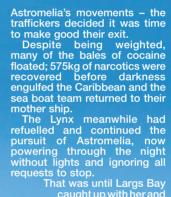
THIS is the moment £20m of cocaine fell into the hands of RFA Largs Bay – on her first front-line operation.

The new landing support ship had just arrived in the Caribbean to take over from HMS Portland in the fight against drug runners when she pounced on a suspicious vessel.



NAS was scrambled.
The helicopter quickly found the Venezuelan boat Astromelia and observed as its crew hastily began dumping bales overboard.

As Largs closed on the scene, her sea boat closed on the bales, while the Lynx kept tabs on



Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment to board the Astromelia.

"I am delighted that we've successfully secured a significant amount of cocaine—and once more dealt a blow to the drug cartels," said Largs Bay's Capt Ian Johnson. "It's particularly satisifying given that this is the ship's first operational deployment after commissioning and demonstrates the ongoing commitment to keep narcotics off our streets."

Astromelia and her crew were escorted by Largs Bay until they were handed over to Venezuelan authorities. "I am delighted that we've





Exe-rated attraction

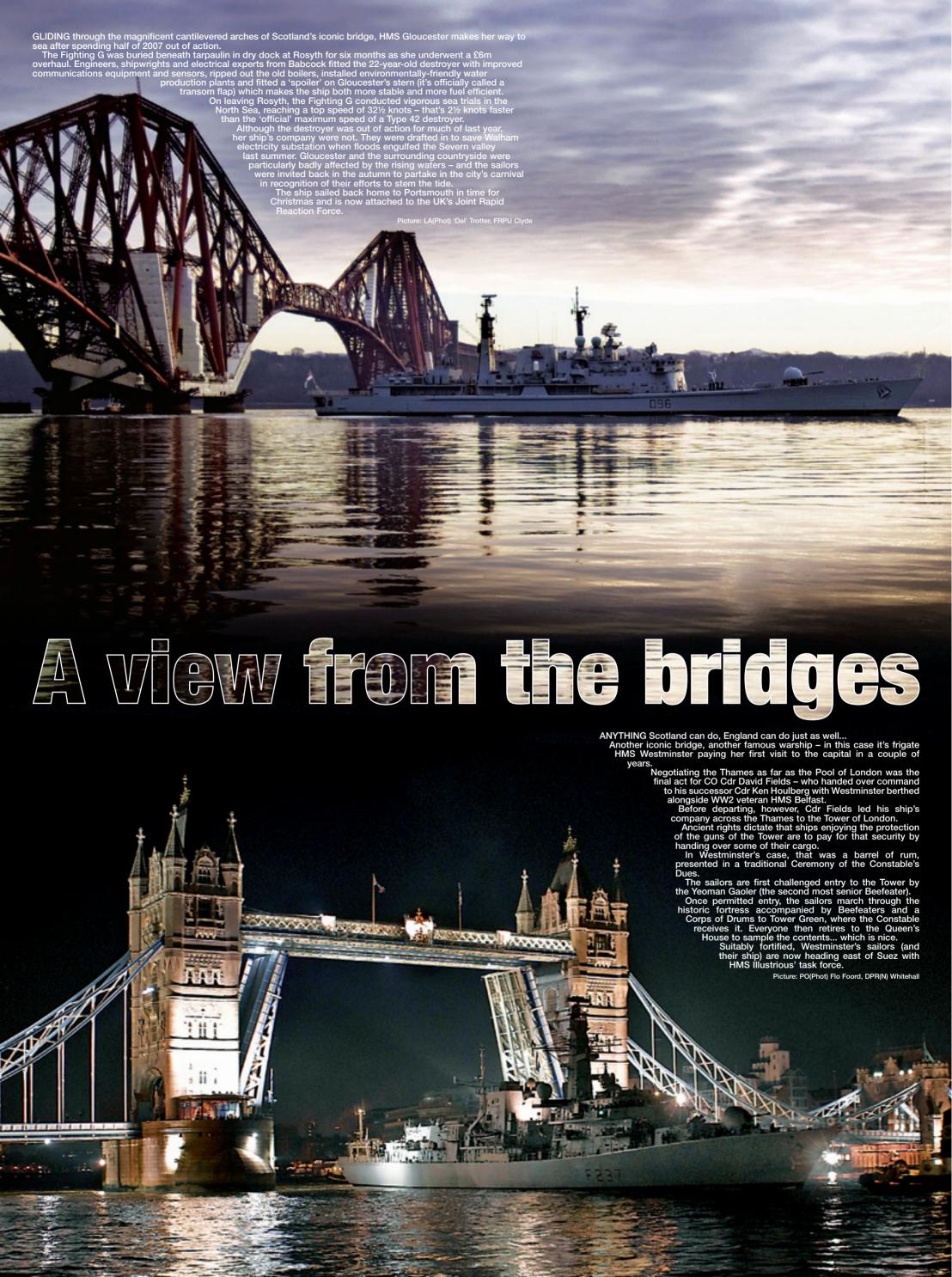
BY FAR the largest and most expensive vessel on display at the 2008 London Boat Show (and the one you'd least like to meet on a dark night if you were up to no good) was veteran destroyer HMS Exeter

The RN has been sending a major warship – always a frigate to the show in London's Docklands since 2004.

This year the Admiralty sent a Type 42 instead – a rather good decision by the bigwigs as some 25,000 people wandered around the Falklands veteran during her ten-day stay at the ExCel Centre (pictured, left).

Exeter hosted presentations, receptions and dinners on behalf of the show's organisers, while her ship's company gave visitors an insight into today's Senior Service.

Picture: LA(Phot) Alex Cave, FRPU Whale Island



A blogging we will go

YOU'VE followed the almost daily progress of HMS Somerset as she emerged from refit. Now you can follow her on deployment.

The Devonport-based frigate has left the West Country behind for six months on NATO patrol around the Mediterranean on Operation

Active Endeavour.

Barely a month after finishing Operational Sea Training – the RN's 'MOT' for ships and their sailors - Somerset takes up the fight against smugglers, people traffickers, terrorists and pirates in the Med alongside Allied warships. It's an operation NATO has been running since October 2001.

Since emerging from refit in Rosyth last year. Somerset's trials, tribulations - and successes - have been candidly reported by her CO Cdr Rob Wilson on his 'captain's blog the first internet diary by an RN commanding officer.

You can keep up with her at hms-somerset-co.blogspot.com

International departures

A CHANGE of scene is usually a good thing - and in the case of the Royal Navy, a very valuable thing as well.

Gone are the days when the Senior Service could feel comfortable with mastery of the North Atlantic.

In the 21st Century it must prove the capability of men (and women) and machines in more exotic climes, and that is a major element of Exercise Orion 08

which is now in full swing.

The deployment will see a task

number of scenarios with allied nations. surveillance, Maritime operations and a major anti-submarine warfare exercise with the Indian Navy all feature in the Orion programme, which the Commander UK Carrier Strike Group,

Cdre Tom Cunningham, described as "capability generation exercise".

He continued: "Every two years we take the whole machinery and prove we can do

what we are configured for.' The task group is itself a multiAustin, Diligence and Bayleaf.

Mine countermeasures vessels HM ships Chiddingfold and Atherstone will also be accompanying the task group east.

The anti-submarine Merlins of the Flying Tigers, 814 Naval Air Squadron, will be along for the ride, while at various points Illustrious will host the Royal Navy pilots of the Naval Strike Wing and the RAF pilots of No1 (Fighter) Squadron in

their ground attack jump jets.

The task group is scheduled to make 20 port visits during the four-month Orion deployment, spread along the route in the Mediterranean, in Africa, the Middle East,

around them to monitor and report shipping patterns, part of the permanent maritime security regime to which Allied navies now subscribe

But there will also be the chance to further prepare the way for the RN's two new carriers in terms of projecting air power

over land, and strike group operations.

And along the way there will be plenty of chances for tactical development; the heat of the Middle East and the sub-continent and the different density of the waters of the Indian Ocean will provide vital data on the performance of weapons systems, aircraft and sensors, and will put different



Three times Twenty-Three

HE guardian angels of **HMS** Northumberland cametotherescue of lone yachtswoman Dee Caffari after winter storms bashed her boat.

The frigate was almost home from deployment to the Mediterranean and east of Suez when she was diverted to aid the stricken sailor.

Dee, too, had almost been home; she had sailed from Brazil and was mak for the finishing line in the French port of Brest at the end of a transatlantic race when the ill-tempered Bay of Biscay conspired against her. The

solo sailor heard tremendous crash, her boat Aviva shuddered, and she jumped up on deck to watch the main mast toppling over the port side of the yacht, roughly 150 miles from La Coruña.

For the next 18 hours Aviva rolled and pitched relentlessly in the Atlantic. "I was scared and felt vulnerable and was worried of being mown down by a ship as I did not show up too well without a mast and sails," she said.

And then out of the darkness appeared the lines of HMS Northumberland. In the SMUGGLERS, drug traffickers, the wrath of Nature – all in a day's work, or rather several months' work for the men and women of three workhorses of the fleet. Type 23 frigates Her Majesty's Ships Northumberland, Richmond and Portland all completed equally fruitful deployments in equally diverse parts of the world as the curtain came down

darkness, there was not a great deal the frigate could do, other than keep watch for Dee so she could get some sleep and provide some shelter from

the winds.
"Just as I was about crack, I heard that guardian angel was coming to keep watch over me in the form of Northumberland," said Dee.

With first light the following morning, the frigate dispatched her sea boat with a hot drink and breakfast for the stranded sailor.

Northumberland remained on the scene until a tug arrived from Spain to take Dee's boat in

tow.

With Dee safe, the warship made a bee-line for Devonport to bring the curtain down on her four-month autumn deployment.

Northumberland left home in August to join NATO's Standing Naval Maritime Group 2 - an international task group charged maintaining security

on the high seas, chiefly the

Mediterranean. That international force was also sucked into NATO's major autumn manoeuvres, Noble Midas, staged off Croatia. It fell to the Type 23 to 'enforce' sanctions and track and board suspicious vessels, as well as fight off air attacks from F4 Phantoms (yep, they're still in service with some of our Allies) and F16 Falcons.

Then it was on to Turkey, Israel and Aqaba in Jordan to spread the word about Allied operations and the maritime campaign against terrorism and

other illegal activities.
So far, so good and fairly typical of operations by SNMG2, but then the force made a rare foray outside the Med. The task group sailed through Suez and into the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden to clamp down on terrorism, piracy and people trafficking.

Now if that hasn't been hard

work enough for the ship's company, a few hardy souls

decided to set themselves a physical challenge.
As Northumberland sailed out

of Plymouth Sound on a fine summer's day, CO Cdr Martin Simpson, navigator Lt Matt Clarke and CPO Jan Hamlyn agreed to take up the 'million metre challenge' – to row one million metres (1,000km or 621 miles) by the time the frigate caught sight of the Hoe once

That meant clocking up least 10,000 metres per That day on the Concept 2 rowing

machines, spurred on by Northumberland's clubz LPT Emma Philips, three circuit training sessions each day for the remainder of the ship's company.

miles is a worthy objective and a fine way of shedding the pounds, but as an added incentive, the trio were sponsored for their efforts.

Three of the ship's charities the Calvert Trust which runs outdoor pursuits for people with disabilities near Kielder Reservoir, the Echo Trust which helps children's hospitals and other health causes, and the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust benefited from the rowers' exertions.

Also east of Suez, though for considerably longer than Northumberland's relatively brief sortie, was HMS Richmond.

The Portsmouth-based 23

the Solent, the bulk of her time devoured by patrols around lraq's two oil platforms.

Richmond took over from HMS Cornwall in the northern Gulf – and was instrumental in carrying out the changes in boarding operations ordered following Iran's seizure of 15 confined to the narrow stretch

of water at the tip of the Gulf.
When Oman was struck by

Cyclone Gonu in September, Richmond supplied 7,000 bottles of drinking water to help victims in devastated areas.
And after handing over

responsibilities off Iraq to her sister HMS Argyll, Richmond headed for the United Arab Emirates port of Ras Al Khaimah to play host to Sheikh Saud Bin Saqr Al Qasimi in the first visit to the Emirate by an RN

vessel in two years.
Out of the Gulf and bound for home, the frigate pounced on two dhows suspected of peo-ple trafficking and worked with Yemeni Coastguard to arrest 13 alleged smugglers.

Half a world away, smugglers fell victim to HMS Portland too, but their vile trade was drugs, not people.

The ship snared seven tonnes of cocaine in the Caribbean, and was also on hand to provide assistance in Belize in the aftermath of Hurricane Dean.

during the deployment and at

its finale.

Second down the gangway (Commanding Officer Cdr Mike Utley was first) as Portland came alongside in Devonport was Logs(CS) Philip Thompson, who promptly knelt on the jetty and asked his partner Miranda Woodhouse to marry him.
With 400 of Portland's fami-

lies and friends watching (no pressure then – Ed), Miranda said "yes", the crowd cheered, and so too the ship's com-

Chef Philip became a dad for the first time during Portland's deployment; he was flown back from the Caribbean to Halifax to see his

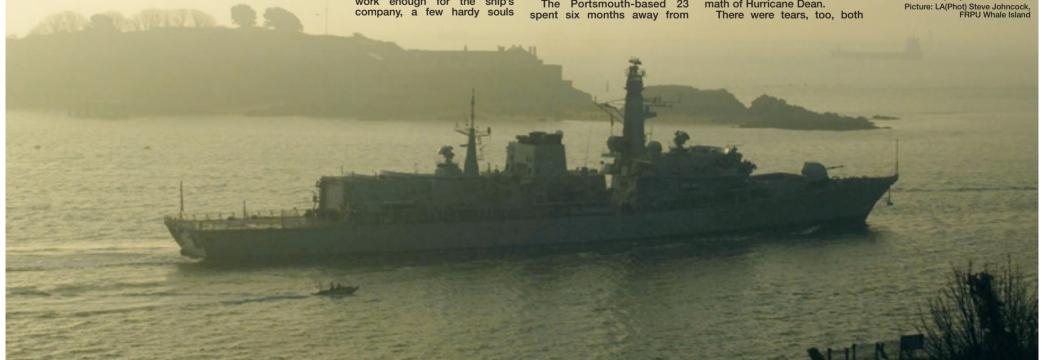
Also making their first appear-during son Mackenzie. ances during
Portland's deployment were Ethan
Smith, born to LS
David Smith and his fiancée Katrina Bleschschmidt,

and Millie Sexton whose birth was watched by PO Nathan Sexton... with not a little input from his wife Helen.

"We achieved our goals in a big way," he said – speaking for his ship and his family.

Guardians of the Gulf, pages 13-15

● All gold... Northumberland passes Drake's Island at the end of her deployment



GLOBAL REACH

THREE hundred and forty-nine people – and one bull – owe their lives to the selfless fliers of HMS Gannet who had

the busiest year of any search and rescue unit since records began.

The Sea Kings of the Prestwick-based unit were scrambled on 357 occasions in 2007 – that's a third more than the previous year, and 100 more times than any other search and rescue formation.

100 more times than any other search and rescue formation.

Gannet's domain covers the Highlands, Lake District and Northern Ireland – and the missions the helicopters flew last year were as diverse as the terrain they flew over: climber rescues, a boat explosion, medical emergencies and a randy bull who became trapped on a farm.

Weather-wise, 2007 wasn't particularly harsh and Scotland did not suffer the horrendous floods southern and central England endured last summer.

But Gannet Search and Rescue Officer Lt Cdr Florry Ford believes the weather was one factor behind the record-breaking year.

"There are more people walking in the hills; less snow has meant climbing has been more technical – which has caught people out; a lot more people are conducting dangerous sports; and people have mobile phones so they can better call the rescue services," he explained.

Perhaps the most demanding rescue of 2007 was one which lasted nearly ten hours – most of them in darkness – above the slopes of Ben Nevis last June.

"We had a crewman swinging on a 250ft wire to get down to three men and two rescue team members," recalled Lt Cdr Martin Lanni, the pilot that night.

"Those guys on the wire are very brave. I

"Those guys on the wire are very brave. eally take my hat off to them because it's sca nough being in the front of the helicopter."

Records compiled by the Aeronautical Rescue Co-ordination Centre only go back to 1983 (so, for example, they don't cover the Fastnet yacht race tragedy).

But those records show that the festive season offered no let-up for the Gannet team.

On Christmas Day alone, one Sea King crossed the Irish Sea to ferry a premature baby from Craigavon on the shores of Lough Neagh to Glasgow's specialist children's hospital, Yorkhill.

to Glasgow's specialist children's hospital, Yorkhill.

The hectic year continued up to the stroke of midnight on December 31.

Four missions were carried out on the final day of 2007: a canoeist with spinal injuries needed plucking from the River Etive near Glen Coe; a young asthma sufferer needed assistance, as did two pensioners who suffered heart attacks.

"We saw in the bells of 2008 on board the helicopter – New Year's Eve was a busy day," said Lt Cdr Lanni, Gannet's second-in-command.

"As we were heading back to base after the final call-out, we were able to enjoy a unique view of what must have been the best fireworks display in Scotland as we flew along the Clyde all the way from Glasgow to Prestwick. It really was quite spectacular."

2008 opened for Gannet's sister SAR unit 771 Naval Air Squadron with a tragedy off The Lizard. Two helicopters from Culdrose were sent up after the trawler La P'tite Julie was feared to have sunk in the stormy Channel roughly 50 miles from England's southernmost tip.

In a combined Anglo-French search, one fisherman was rescued, but all the Culdrose Sea Kings saw of the trawler were two empty life rafts and wreckage strewn across the ocean.

Ordnance and survey (ship)

MINEHUNTER HMS Hurworth has left behind the cold, unforgiving Solent in winter... for the cold unforgiving Baltic and North Sea.

The Hunt-class warship will be away from home until the end of May, working with NATO's Standing Mine Countermeasures Group 1 (now in its 59th year in various

guises). Hurworth (pictured below by Allen leaving a stormy Pompey) takes over from her sister Middleton, operating alongside vessels from Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Lithuania, Poland and Norway.

and Norway.

The Portsmouth-based sailors go away safe in the knowledge they're at the peak

of their game.

Before departing, the ship's company received the James Acton Mine Warfare Efficiency Award - presented to the ship which stands out in the MCMV

award, named in honour of a lieutenant commander killed by an earthquake in Turkey, for her efforts in the Med in

Cool waters prevail initially for the Hunt; the Baltic remains littered with ordnance from two world wars and the NATO force conducts regular sweeps which always locate mines, bombs and other explosives.

As Hurworth joined the task group, so too did another RN vessel – as its leader.

Command of the force now rests in the hands of Cdr Chris Davies who is using survey ship HMS Roebuck as his HQ. It's the first time in six years the RN has been in charge.

been in charge.

The entire group gathered in the Belgian port of Zeebrugge for the official change of command ceremony as Belgium's Cdr Serge Ots handed the reins to Cdr Davies, watched by Commander-in-Chief Fleet and Allied Maritime Component Allied Maritime Component Commander Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope.

The admiral told the group's men and women that their force was a fine example of NATO's

"The group has had a highly successful year marking, identifying and disposing of dangerous ordnance," Admiral Stanhope continued.

"This ordnance is a direct threat to seafarers and the economic lifelines that the

maritime sector provides our nations." Besides disposing wartime explosives, there will also be time on the deployment for goodwill visits to Lithuania,

Germany and Belgium.

And not all the task group's time will be spent in chilly

northern waters.
In June, the force will switch its attention to the shores of Spain for NATO's principal naval exercise of the year, Loyal Mariner 2008.



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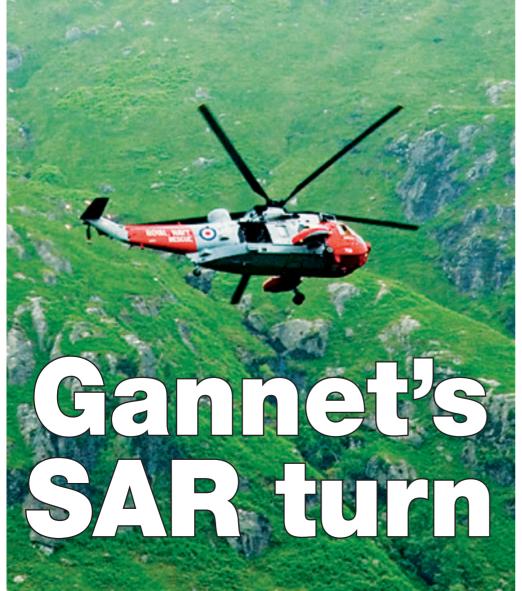
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To Bulwark the baton

AFTER 18 months in the vanguard of Britain's amphibious forces, HMS Albion had handed the flagship 'baton' to her sister in time for winter war games.

HMS Bulwark will lead the RN's involvement in Exercise Armatura Borealis (not a species of butterfly, but Latin for 'armour of the north wind'), NATO-led war games in northern Norway.

Both sisters will deploy for the exercises, alongside frigate HMS Cornwall and Royal Marines of 3 Commando Brigade and 45 Commando.

The Commander of the

The Commander of the Amphibious Task Group, Cdre Phil Jones, made his home aboard Albion with his staff and thanked the ship's company for playing a leading role in exercises off Africa and in the Baltic, as well as home waters.

"To the ship's company of HMS Albion, I would like to say thank you for all your efforts and support," the commodore told sailors at a ceremonial transfer of flagship duties and responsibilities.

"To HMS Bulwark, I would like to say congratulations on your successful return to operational status."

Armatura Borealis runs throughout this month and into March.

PWO is me — yet again

BUDDING warfare officers joined frigate HMS Lancaster for the first seaborne test of their skills.

Five students from HMS Collingwood had already undergone several weeks of intensive instruction at the Fareham establishment, both on the simulator and in the classroom.

Nothing is better than the real thing, of course, so trainees and instructors joined the Portsmouth-based Type 23 for 'basic phase sea week' – the first major hurdle in the long road to becoming a principal warfare officer.

Students are tested in every aspect of war at sea, including a 'Thursday War' off Plymouth.

"Thursday War" off Plymouth.
It's the fourth time in the past year that the team at the Maritime Warfare School have used the Red Rose ship as their floating training platform.

"Lancaster's a most excellent host to staff and students alike," enthused Lt Cdr Marcus Butler RAN, one of the PWO assessors. "The ship has come up with

the goods time and time again, often at short notice."

The potential PWOs have

The potential PWOs have now returned to Collingwood for further training, but will be back at sea for an 'advanced phase sea week', their final assessment

A last look at fish...

SAILORS in HMS Ledbury will soon be bidding farewell to the sight – and smell – of fish.

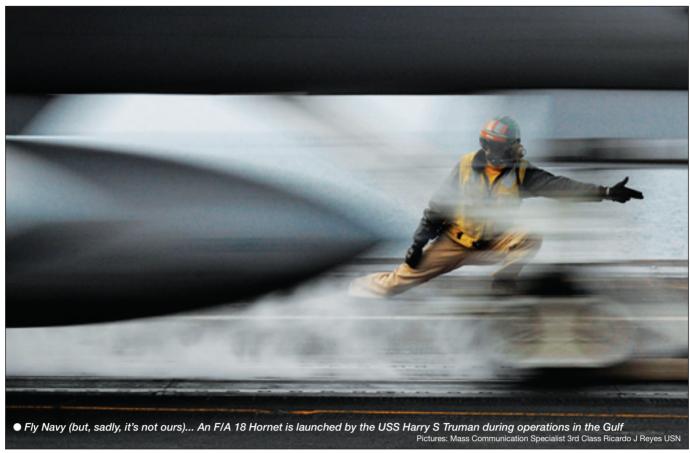
The Hunt-class warship

– designed to deal with the
threats of mine warfare – begins
her final fishery protection patrol
this month.

Ledbury spent the final days of 2007 hosting school children and members of the Combined Cadet Force for 'sea days', intended to give young people an idea of life at sea by demonstrating a number of manoeuvres and drills, including replenishment at sea and man overboard.

2008 opened with the ship receiving an overhaul to her living spaces and command system in Portsmouth.

That revamp allowed one in six Ledburyites (*made-up word – Ed*), led by CO Lt Cdr Paul Russell, to head to France for the RN ski championships.



Sea Knights and Dusty Dog days

THE men and women of HMS Manchester were given the honour of 'riding shotgun' for 100,000 tons of sovereign US 'turf' as their deployment with the Harry S Truman shifted to the Gulf.

Oh, it also meant they were in charge of air defence for all naval forces in the Arabian Gulf.

And there was the small matter of directing operations by the Busy Bee's Lynx at the same time.

So no pressure on the ops room team, then.

After two months attached to Carrier Strike Group, led by the Truman (or HST as she's commonly known), the Busy Bee was asked by US Fifth Fleet – responsible for operations in the Gulf – to take command of the skies.

skies. "This is a busy task for an American warship, let alone for an older British destroyer," said Cdr David Dominy, Manchester's Commanding Officer. "As always, we rose

to the challenge and did a great job as the 'shotgun' escort, as well as conducting flight safety fighter control duties for all US aircraft, and orchestrating our own air operations using our Lyngers

operations using our Lynx."

This was the first time (so the Manchester team tell us, although there's a good chance our correspondents might write otherwise – Ed) the RN has been in charge of air defence for a US carrier battlegroup and one the Brits performed with aplomb.

So much aplomb, in fact, that US Cdre Rick Williams is making the Type 42 his home as he commands Allied maritime

operations in the central Gulf.

Escorting the Truman has afforded the Mancunians sights rarely seen by the rest of the RN.

The destroyer formed up with the rest of the carrier group for an historic photo opportunity.

photo opportunity.
Whilst helicopters
from the 'Dusty Dogs'
squadron buzzed about
taking photographs, the Truman
launched a succession of aircraft
from her deck, chiefly Hornets and
an E2C airborne early warning

Not to be outdone, Manchester dug out her largest, grandest ensign and raised it on her mainmast. (We'd love to show you the resulting image... but the US Navy haven't sent it yet, unfortunately.)

Of course, keeping up with the Trumans isn't easy. Not only is she ten years younger than her British escort, she doesn't guzzle

as much 'gas'.

Actually, she doesn't guzzle any 'gas', relying on nuclear propulsion

to power her through the oceans.
That means she can maintain high speeds pretty much constantly... whereas Manchester can't without frequent trips to the filling station.

To maintain the HST's pace, the Busy Bee has been relying on the American counterpart to the RFA to keep her going.

USNS Arctic is a constant

companion, providing all the fuel the destroyer requires.

And when not RAS-ing alongside, Manchester has been RAS-ing vertically, with Seahawks from the Sea Knights (Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 22) ferrying stores between the battle group ships.



MASF change

THE king is dead, long live the

king.
The former aviation support organisation for the RFA,
RFANSU (Royal Fleet Auxiliary
Naval Support Unit) is no more.
It ceased to be on December

1... the very same day that the new Maritime Aviation Support Force (MASF) stood up for the first time.

It is the duty of the Culdrosebased organisation to ensure that any flight deploying to an RN or RFA vessel, or to a forward operating base ashore, has all the kit and personnel support needed.

And that can be quite a large team: up to 50 personnel in cases – meteorologists, PTIs, survival specialists, aircraft controllers, logisticians, engineers and medics.

At present you'll find men and women from MASF – motto auxilio ad alta, reaching the heights with help – at (deep breath) Prestwick in Scotland supporting HMS Gannet, the Fleet Weather and Oceanographic Centre at Northwood, FOST, Yeovilton, RFA Fort Victoria, and the Maritime Warfare School at Collingwood.

Further afield, teams are deployed with RFA Argus off Oman, HMS Illustrious bound east of Suez, RFA Largs Bay in the Caribbean and ashore in Iraq, Afghanistan and Oman.

Gold Rover saves da day

TANKER RFA Gold Rover broke off from her usual refuelling duties around the Falklands to ferry vital medical kit to one of the world's most remote communities.

The South Atlantic island of Tristan da Cunha is home to just 271 people – many of whom were struck down at the end of 2007 by a virus which caused breathing difficulties.

With medical supplies on the volcanic British dependency running low, the island's administrator David Morley sent an 'SOS' to London.

The outbreak was brought under control – but the virus did severely deplete medical stocks, hence the plea for help six weeks ahead of a scheduled visit by a supply ship.

supply ship.

And so Gold Rover was called upon to steam for Tristan Da Cunha which lies some 1,800 miles west of Cape Town; with no airstrip, re-supply by sea was the sole option open to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Putting the boots on

SAILORS and commandos deploying to Afghanistan and Iraq will be offered a choice of two types of combat boots for the desert in future.

After tests of 22 makes of boot in theatre at the end of last year – following gripes about standard-issue footwear for desert ops – the MOD decided footwear by Meindl and Lowa met the demands of front-line personnel.

Female personnel deploying will receive boots made by Lowa, specially designed for the feet of the fairer sex.

The new footwear is being distributed this spring during the roulement of personnel.







IT'S not been the busiest period for nautical stories in the papers, but among the articles catching our eye were:

ALL members of the special forces are to be guaranteed anonymity in

Families of members of the SAS and SBS killed on operations had expressed anger that the MOD appeared to have sanctioned the publishing of their names.

Defence sources said the SAS and SBS felt that it was wrong for their members to be treated like any other ordinary regiment when someone was killed.

- The Times

A PROUD old Navy ship that enjoyed a long career was carefully led out of Portsmouth for the final

HMS Fearless was towed out of the harbour bound for Ghent where she will be broken down and recycled.

It was a sad day and hundreds gathered on the Round Tower to pay their respects to the 12-tonne [sic!] assault ship.

- Portsmouth News

A REPLICA model of HMS Victory could sit right next to Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square if it wins a competition.

Judges are considering six entries for a design to sit on a fourth plinth at the London landmark.

Nelson's Ship in a Bottle has been designed by London-born artist Yinka Shonibare and will be up against other entries, including one by Tracey Emin - a model of four meerkats standing together.

Portsmouth News



● Four for good... (From nearest the camera) HMS Argyll, RFA Sir Bedivere, HMS Campbeltown and HMS Enterprise in front of the Al

Coastal commands

here is something you don't see every day.

Four of Britain's Gulf guardians, together, in the shadow of the oil terminal they are protecting.

The core of the UK's

commitment to safeguarding Iraqi waters mustered off the Al Basrah Oil Terminal as HMS Campbeltown took over from HMS Argyll as the chief protector

of the platforms.

And being in the vicinity, survey ship HMS Enterprise (updating

charts of these waters – see page 15) and RFA Sir Bedivere, vital to training the Iraqi Navy (see pages 13 and 14 and right) couldn't resist

a shot at the limelight.

Argyll has conducted three lengthy patrols around the two oil platforms with Allied and Iraqi forces, ensuring tankers and local fishermen go about their daily business safely and legally.

Campbeltown has been conducting anti-terror and antipiracy operations in the Indian Ocean.

"Conducting a thorough handover is as essential as anything else we've done up here," explained Lt Cdr Tim Davey, Argyll's operations officer.
"It's important to

"It's important to give Campbeltown the best chance to continue and build on what's been achieved.

"We've made real progress in a number of areas, including training the Iraqi Navy and marines."

And talking of handovers... Iraq's most important waterway has been given to the burgeoning Iraqi Navy to patrol.

The Khawr Abd Allah (God's

Highway) is the gateway to the country's principal port Umm Qasr, carrying almost all of Iraq's seaborne trade.

Safeguarding the river has been the task initially of the Allies, then the Allies and Iraqis since the fall of Saddam.

Under the wings of the Naval Transition Team, an RN-led group of experienced sailors and

marines, Iraqi sailors and marines naval infantry rather than commandos – have been trained to conduct security patrols and boarding operations with the aim, of taking control of all territorial waters eventually.

Iraqi Army Day – the anniversary of the formation of the country's army in 1921 – was chosen as the symbolic date for the handover of

responsibilities.
The occasion was also marked with a mini 'fleet review' by Iraqi patrol vessels on the KAA, watched by their leader Cdre Ahmed and Australian Cdre Allan Du Toit, in charge of Task Force 158 which oversees protection of Iraq's interests in the northern

Gulf.
"It was great to see the Iraqi equivalent of Navy Days," said Capt Jock Alexander, in charge of the 50-strong transition team. "Despite the relatively small

fleet, the challenges the Iraqi Navy have overcome to get here were substantial. It's really rewarding to commemorate this significant development with a naval display which calls upon many of the skills that the NaTT team has helped to nurture."

Among those skills on show at the ceremony were a man overboard drill by the Iraqi diving platoon and a fire exercise aboard PB101, one of five patrol boats which are the backbone of the small navy.

Farewell to the first and the last

THE last of Britain's 'Knights of the Round Table' which played a vital role in liberating the Falklands finally bows out next month after four decades of illustrious service.

Landing support ship RFA Sir Bedivere has been at the heart of every major conflict this nation has been involved in for the past quarter of a century.

Known affectionately as 'The First Knight' – although she wasn't actually the first of a class of six 'landing ship logistics' laid down in the 1960s and in legend Sir Lancelot was Arthur's 'first knight' – Sir Bedivere has continued to fulfil a key role right to the very end of her life.

Four of her sisters have already paid off; a fifth, RFA Sir Galahad, was destroyed by an Argentine air attack in the Falklands.

The last 12 months of Sir Bedivere's life have been spent in the northern Arabian Gulf where her presence has been fundamental to training Iraq's burgeoning Navy and Marines.

The Iraqis use the veteran support ship as a floating base, under the guidance of a Royal Navy-led training team. The ship is also home to American fast patrol boats of Inshore Boat Unit 22 which conduct security patrols around Iraq's two oil platforms.

Commodore Allan Du Toit, the Australian naval officer in charge of Allied maritime operations off Iraq, singled out Sir Bedivere's contribution, saying simply: "She's indispensable to what we

Almost a year to the day since her departure for the Gulf, Sir Bedivere returns home to Marchwood Sea Mounting Centre in Southampton Water for the final time.

"Sir Bedivere has served the RFA and her country with distinction in a number of hotspots over the years and is now completing her commission in a blaze of glory," said Captain David Buck RFA, Sir Bedivere's final Commanding Officer.

"I feel hugely privileged to bring the first – and last – ship of her class home after such a highprofile final deployment in which the ship has undoubtedly played a massive part in developing the effectiveness of the Iraqi Navy."

Although the tragic story of her sister Sir Galahad in the Falklands is well documented, Sir Bedivere was the first RFA to be bombed during the 1982 war.

The 1,000lb bomb struck her 20-ton crane, cut through the shell plating and bounced into the sea where it exploded; fortunately there were no casualties and no serious damage.

Sir Bedivere's place in the Gulf has been taken by new landing ship RFA Cardigan Bay.



 Dark skies... A 702 NAS Lynx is silhouetted against an ominous sky during training with HMS Ark Picture: LA(Phot) Brett Turner, HMS Ark Royal

Scilly season for 702

FIVE student Lynx crews earned their wings after three weeks of ground-breaking training aboard Ark Royal.

The carrier is typically home to Harriers Sea Kings and Merlins, while RFA Argus is typically used by 702 NAS for operational conversion training.

But who says that's set in stone?

So seven Lynx, ten students, four trainee aircraft controllers and 70 engineers and technicians, plus kit and caboodle joined Ark as she prowled off the Iberian peninsula.

For Ark this was the first time she'd operated a Lynx squadron en masse, and for

some of the AETs and AEMs, this was their first spell at sea. Every exercise needs a scenario to hone the

skills of personnel. In this instance, it was the lot of the poor folk of the Scilly Islands to be trampled

on by Redovians. Enter Ark and 702 to drive back the

enemy task force with a series of fullblown simulated offensive strikes.

With the Scillies suitably liberated, all ten students of Lynx 1/07 course earned their wings - presented by the RN's most senior aviator, Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Sir Adrian Johns.





EX-SERVICE MEN'S ASSOCIATION Frankland Moore House, 185-187 High Road,

Chadwell Heath, Romford, Essex RM6 6NA Tel: 020 8590 1124 Fax: 020 8599 2932 email: headquarters@blesma.org website:www.blesma.org

BLESMA aims to give ex-Service men and women who either lost limbs, the use of their limbs, or one or both eyes as a result of service or after service, in any branch of Her

Majesty's Porces or Auxiliary Porces, a counselling and caring service and help in everyday problems. We also assist their needy dependants, in particular their Widows. At the outbreak of World War II and all conflicts since, many Members of BLESMA went to War young and whole. They came home disabled for life. Whilst we do not wish to

receive new Members, due to the current conflicts in the Gulf and Afghanistan and as

service life takes its inevitable toll, it is unavoidable that we shall do so. What do our Members get from your generosity? They get happiness, peace and security, advice, representation, rehabilitation and fellowship. Our two Residential and Care Homes provide permanent residence care and convalescence for the Members as well as a break for relatives from nursing care.

All this costs money, a large amount of money. We receive no Government Grants and rely wholly on the generosity of the public. Please consider making a donation now or a legacy in the future for those that gave so much and ask for so little in return.

75 YEARS OF SERVICE 1932 - 2007







head back to the accommodation and get their rest.

Morning brief is a chance to find out what the day holds. Weather, airfield and aircraft states are fully briefed, as is the latest intelligence and tactical situation – we need to know what is going on in the Area of Operations (AO) over the coming day in order to provide the best support we can to the boys on the ground.

boys on the ground.

A full sortie brief covers all eventualities to make sure that all bases eventualities to make sure that all bases are covered – we leave the Operations room absolutely clear about our task over the coming hours: who we are supporting, how we contact them, how long we spend in their area, what support we have, in the form of air refuelling or AWACS etc... We outbrief with the Squadron authoriser in plenty of time and set off to the line to dress for the mission and sign for to dress for the mission and sign for our aircraft.

The engineering team is also coming off a long night and will more than likely have been working hard to

HIGH above the mountainous terrain of Afghanistan, a Harrier of the Naval Strike Wing refuels from an American tanker – all in a day's work for the team at Kandahar, as pilot **LT IAN SLOAN** describes.



ground from height.
Then to the aircraft – the engineers are ahead of us in removing blanks and bungs, getting external

edge of their limits – again, this requires focus to ensure everyone's safety.

Time arrives for engine start and as we flick the switch the jet comes to life. Gradually systems power up and are checked for correct operation and as we wave the chocks away and head for the runway we're continually checking that the jet is 'good to go'. Last minute engine checks on the threshold then it is a slam to full power and we are off. ourselves on the ground and in need of rescue this has some additional kit that will aid our survival. We also pick up a pair of binoculars which can be a great aid to locating points of interest on the

ensure that our aircraft

are serviceable and

ready to go on the mission.
Checking through the servicing book for the aircraft we make sure that it is fuelled and armed as required and there are no limitations that we were not aware of.

Then it's on to survival equipment where we dress for the mission. Each pilot has his own take on the 'dress to survive' principle and as such will have a suitable amount of insulation against the bitter cold of the Afghan winter.

In addition to the usual G suit and

Life Saving Jacket we wear a Combat Survival Waistcoat - should we find

power to the aircraft so that as we arrive the navigational equipment is already aligning and we can check various aircraft systems without starting the engine, fuel is precious and the longer we can make it last on the sortie could make the difference between life and death.

Walking around a fully-armed jet, checking all the weapons brings a reality check – we are here to do a job of work and this brings added focus on the task in hand. The aircraft are fully loaded and are operating close to the

Flying in Afghanistan is very different from home – certainly the scenery is a huge contrast – but the procedures remain the same.

On checking in with the Joint Tactical Air Controller (JTAC) all becomes routine. There is a real international flavour in country, over the course of a few hours we could switch between UK, Canadian, Australian, Dutch, Spanish, Italian, French and Canadian JTACs. Each able to control us to achieve a weapon delivery where required.

The majority of our work in Afghanistan is supporting the troops on the ground, our main method is sitting overhead and letting them talk us on to a point of interest.

a point of interest.

We can then use our aircraft systems

to help identify whether they are patrolling a friendly neighbourhood where there is a normal pattern of life, or are walking into an ambush. Where required we can respond in kind – we have a wide variety of weapons and can offer a graduated response – often the situation will not warrant a 1,000lb bomb straight away and in that case we can use rockets or 500lb bombs.

Weapon selection is something that the JTACs are trained in but as the experts we may suggest an alternative if we feel the situation dictates.

No two sorties are the same. Some can be quite benign, watching a patrol make its way peacefully up a dirt track, others can be more frenetic and on occasion the JTACs radio calls will be interrupted by the sound of gunfire in the background – that certainly brings the reality of the situation to bear.

On completion of our task we 'check out' with our controllers and return to base. As we arrive back on chocks we further check that the aircraft is still serviceable before shutting down. The engineers will already be refuelling and re-arming the aircraft as we walk back into the line office.

The process then runs in reverse, getting out of flying kit and signing the aircraft back to the engineers before making our way back to squadron operations and debriefing with the squadron intelligence officer, in order to glean as much from the sortie as we

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So ends the flying for the day, the rest of the day may be spent as squadron authoriser, or if we're lucky an afternoon off.

We'd then be free to head to any of the coffee shops on the base for some

the coffee shops on the base for some light refreshment or to escape to the gym for some exercise.

gym for some exercise.

Trying to sit down at a computer at some stage to contact home or writing a letter might also be on the agenda before heading for dinner and then getting some sleep before the cycle starts all over again.

Overall, flying in Afghanistan varies between mundane and frantic.

We take great pride in providing the best service we can to the guys on the ground and to get their feedback as they filter through Kandahar on their way home makes the effort much more rewarding.

A MASSIVE THANK YOU FROM 'WIRELESS FOR THE BLIND'



Although the senior management at SSVC decided that the 2007 'Wireless for the Blind' Appeal by BFBS was the last to be held on our behalf, we hope you'll still be able to support us.

After all, you've done so much to help our work over the years in so many different ways.

Your ceaseless support has enabled us to bring the comfort and companionship of radio to many thousands of blind and partially sighted listeners in the UK who are in need.

In fact, since our appeals on BFBS first started, the tireless efforts of many, many UK servicemen and women like you have raised over £2 million!

And that's bought a lot of radios – not to mention a great deal of happiness!

So from everyone at British Wireless for the Blind Fund and all the thousands of people you've helped, we'd just like to say...

Thank you to all the BFBS staff and volunteers who've given up their time for us...

Thank you to all the donors of prizes that have helped raise additional funds...

Thank you to all the whacky fundraisers who ran, jumped, shaved, cooked, kidnapped and did so many amazing things...

Thank you to all those who've given money to sponsor them.

And thank you to everyone who has dipped into their pockets to donate money for our cause!

We really value your support, so we hope you'll stay in touch!

To find out more about us, visit us at: www.blind.org.uk



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KEEPING BLIND PEOPLE IN TOUCH WITH THE WORLD

out to Orion

IR DEFENCE during this year's exercises on deployment Orion 08 to the Indian Ocean will be safe in the hands of Type 42 destroyer HMS Edinburgh, with a little help from other nation's warships.

In fact the rather impressive multinational Task Group boasts 2,500 personnel in 13 ships and one boat, and a range of fixed and rotary wing aircraft.

The veteran destroyer is joined by frigate HMS Westminster, submarine HMSTrafalgar, RFAs Wave Knight, Fort Austin, Diligence and Bayleaf, and MCMVs HMS Chiddingfold and Atherstone, all under the lead of carrier HMS Illustrious

But working alongside the Brits during the exercises will be the American Arleigh Burke destroyer USS Cole, the French air defence destroyer FS Jean Bart and the Spanish Aegis frigate SNS Mendez

HMS Edinburgh spent the last weeks of 2007 in her home port of Portsmouth, readying herself for this far-ranging deployment to the Far East, visiting 20 ports in the Mediterranean, Africa, Middle East and South Asia.

The marine and weapon engineers on board have been kept busy with several new engine and weapon system upgrades, including an improved Command and Control system.

The Fighter Controllers on board the destroyer have been put through their paces to keep up to date on their NATO Grade 1 Alpha Qualifications, useful considering the aircraft they might encounter on this Orion trip.

And as keeping the seas safe remains a top priority for all Royal



HMS Edinburgh at sea under moody skies off the coast of Portsmouth

Navy ships, the ship's boarding team have been put through a tough stint of training down in Plymouth, practising scenarios from getting on board friendly fishing vessels by seaboat to fastroping from the ship's Lynx to search suspect vessels for drugs and arms.

The name itself dates back to 1707, where for two years a fifth rate with 32 guns bore the name, until sunk to become a breakwater at Harwich

The Warspite of 1666 was rebuilt to become HMS Edinburgh 40 years later, a name that survived two subsequent rebuilds until the ship was broken up in 1771 at Plymouth

Next came a third rate of 1811, adapted to a screw ship in 1846,

and sold off in 1865.

Two days before her launch in March 1882, the Majestic changed her name to Edinburgh – a 9,420-ton turret ship that served until the end of the first decade of the 20th Century.
The 10,000-ton cruiser of 1939

has become the most famous HMS Edinburgh, not only because of her distinguished wartime service but because of her reputation as a 'treasure ship'

As hostilities broke out, she was serving with the 18th Cruiser Squadron; she then transferred to the 2nd Cruiser Squadron in October. Much of her early wartime career was spent on patrols and convoy duties, winning a number of battle honours along the way.

But on April 30 1942 while on convoy duty back from Murmansk, she was hit by two torpedoes fired

from the German U-boat U456. She survived, but with heavy damage she was taken under tow. Eventually she recovered sufficiently to make her own way at slow speed.

However her recovery was short-lived as her convoy QP11 was attacked again on May 2 by German destroyers in the Barents

Picture: LA(Phot) Gregg Macready Sea and she was hit by another

torpedo.

In the end Edinburgh was abandoned and finally scuttled by a torpedo fired from the destroyer HMS Foresight. In all, two officers and 56 ratings were lost in the battle.

But down with the metal of the ship went £5 million of gold bullion, a war payment from Russia for American weapons.

Almost 40 years later in September 1981 the wartime Edinburgh was in the news once more, when the gold – now worth some £45 million – was eventually salvaged from her wreck in the



Ushant	1747	3
Cape Francois	1757	1
Syria	1840	
Baltic Norway	1854-55	
Norway	1940-41	_
Bismarck	1941	
Atlantic	1941	
Malta Convoys	1941	0
Arctic	1941-42	7

Class: Type 42 (batch 3) destroyer
Pennant number: D97 Builder: Cammell Laird, Birkenhead Laid down: September 8, Launched: April 14, 1983 Commissioned: December 17, 1985 Displacement: 4,500 tons Length: 141 metres Beam: 15.2 metres Draught: 5.8 metres
Speed: 30 knots
Complement: 287
Propulsion: COGOG: two RR Olympus TM3B gas turbines; two RR Tyne RM1C gas turbines; two shafts; cp props Armament: Twin Sea Dart missile launcher; 4.5 inch Mk 8 gun; two 20mm close range guns; two Phalanx; Seagnat and decoy launchers Helicopter: Lynx

British Energy

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In return we can offer an excellent salary, competitive benefits package and relocation assistance if required.

For further information and to apply online please visit www.british-energy.com/careers If you do not have internet access please call 01452 653740 quoting the reference number.

Closing date for applications: 22 February 2008.

British Energy is committed to equality of opportunity.





PO Tom Crean and **CPO William Lashley, AM**

HEROES OF THE ROYAL NAVY No.46

FOR almost a century, the image of Captain Scott huddled around in a tent and the words of Captain Oates – "I am just going outside" - have served as monuments to that very British noble deed: the heroic

For decades, Britons were weaned on the story of the Polar party, beaten to the foot of the world by the Norwegian Amundsen, his dogs, and, above all, by bad weather and bad luck.

The "hardihood, endurance and courage" of the Naval officer, Lt Henry Bowers, Dr Edward Wilson, PO Edgar Evans and Capt Oates became a story which "stirred the heart of every Englishman".

became a story which "stirred the heart of every Englishman".

Yet the tragedy in Antarctica in the austral summer of 1911-12 could have been even greater had it not been for the fortitude of two senior ratings, Hampshireman William Lashley and Tom Crean from County Kerry.

Either man might have shared the fate of Scott had he chosen them, not PO Evans, for the final slog to the Pole.

Instead, they turned about around 180 miles from the southernmost point on the globe, accompanying Scott's deputy Lt 'Teddy' Evans back to base camp.

Crean, typically stoical, unflappable, wept at the decision to turn back; "even Lashley was effected", Scott noted in his diary. They nevertheless gave three hearty cheers for the five ne would ever see alive a

The trio's journey was no less fraught with danger, bad weather and ill luck than Scott's ill-fated odyssey.

Lt Evans began increasingly to suffer from the effects of scurvy. Finally, with still 83 miles to go to the nearest refuge hut, Evans urged his comrades to abandon him to an icy grave and save themselves.

Both senior rates refused. Instead, for the

next four days, they hauled Evans across the snow on a sledge for almost 50 miles.

At this point, the party split. Crean went on alone to raise help, while Lashley remained behind to care for the officer.

In a march 18 hours long, Crean reached the hut where he found the expedition surgeon and two dog teams, which immediately set off for Lashley and Evans and carried them to safety.

Both ratings were subsequently awarded the Albert Medal for their

"gallant conduct" which undoubtedly saved the life of Lt Evans.

Evans would subsequently distinguish him-self in action against the Germans, earning the nickname 'Evans of the Broke'.

Tom Crean took part in the search for Scott's party and buried them. After service in WW1, he left the RN and returned to his native island to run a pub, The South Pole Inn. Today, he has a glacier and a mountain named in his honour.

Lashley too served his nation in the Great War, he also worked as a customs officer and lived out his retirement in the village of his birth, Hambledon, north of Portsmouth.

In time, their rescue of Lt Evans would be hailed as "the finest feat of individual heroism from the entire age of exploration"

Tom Crean rears an Antarctic family
 Sally's quadruplets (the pups by Sally
and Samson: Roger, Nell, Toby and Nelson,
Shackleton expedition, 1914-1916)





N THE fading light of an autumn afternoon, a dozen or so men in desert fatigues check weapons and radios on the upper deck of RFA Sir Bedivere.

A few don black woolly hats. All slip on bright orange life jackets.
A few hundred yards away sits

the Rio Genoa, high in the water,

waiting patiently.

The men scramble down rope ladders into waiting boats, bobbing up and down rather violently in the heavy swell.

The boats bounce and thump as they head for the red-black tanker, then bob furiously once more as they ride the waves beneath the

Rio Genoa's rope ladder.

In the glare of the sun, you can just make out a few bright orange dots scrambling up the ladder, then on to a much more accommodating stairway to the

tanker's upper deck.

This is typical work in the northern Arabian Gulf.

The marines will secure the ship, their boarding officer will join them, check the manifest, conduct a search and then the Rio Genoa will have cleared one hurdle before it can finally fill its tanks from one of Iraq's two oil platforms.

We have been doing similar tasks for decades. So too the Australians. And the Americans.

But today, it is Iraqi naval infantry – marines – and Iraqi sailors doing this, under the watchful eye of British-led experts, Transition Team

Each week a group of Iraqis and their trainers leave Umm Qasr behind and spend five days aboard Sir Bedivere, a floating school and base at the hub of the Allied effort to safeguard Iraqi waters.

It would be wrong to judge the Iraqi sailors and marines by our standards.

They are not as honed as the Allied navies, but then we have centuries of expertise and tradition to call upon; Iraq's navy has existed less than five years.

Of course, there was a navy here before and many men in the 'new navy' were also in the 'old navy'

But in the old navy, rank and leadership, counted for little. There were officers. And there

were men. Period.

Yes, there were sergeants and

IN THE second of our features on operations in the northern Arabian Gulf, RICHARD HARGREAVES visits the Khawr Al Amaya Oil Terminal and meets the Iraqi sailors and marines who will one day safeguard it on their own.

warrant officers, but the gulf between the men and their officers was cavernous.

There were officers and below them were the workers.

That gulf has to be closed. Noncommissioned officers are the

backbone of any fighting force. But how do you teach leadership

in a land where for decades leadership equalled dictatorship?

You choose examples from history. There is 'the Book' – *The* Koran – which provides plenty of paths to follow. And there are military leaders – Suleman, Saladin (it's important to pick great Muslim warriors as role models).

That said, it can be difficult to follow the example of someone who fought almost a millennium

So, there are more simple, tangible 'leaders' to look up to.
"Think of someone you admired, you looked up to as a child or as a young man – a teacher, an old man, perhaps a sergeant," imparts Lt Cdr Tristan Lovering of the Naval Transition Team to a couple of dozen Iraqi NCOs.

"Remember that person and why you were prepared to follow them. Always remember them."

In a few years' time, these men of new jundi – junior rates; Iraq's navy will more than double from just shy of 1,200 men today to 2,500 by 2012.

"They will be the small boys and you will be the old men to look up to," says Lt Cdr Lovering. "Show them the attributes that you admired.

"The future lies in your hands. It has to be better than it used to be."

Indeed it must. It is not for me to say whether life is better or worse than before.

Wahid, a boat driver, was a senior rating in the 'old navy'. Now, aged 36, he is at the bottom rung of the ladder again.

Five years ago he earned around £25 each month; today that figure

has ballooned fourfold. But before the 2003 toppling of the Saddam regime, Wahid could buy 5kg tomatoes for 25p. Today

1kg will set him back maybe 50p. Inflation is compounded by the extended families many of the men look after – not merely wives and children, but often parents, brothers, sisters and their families

It is hardly surprising, then, that these men have no mod cons. No iPods, no laptops in their messes. But no books, no magazines even. (They do, however, have lots of 'Casanova' – a Saudi-made deodorant whose overpowering smell drifts through the passages of Sir Bedivere during evening rounds - "Psst psst" = "Very clean," the Iraqi sailors explain.)

Mod cons, in fairness, are the last of these men's concerns.

No-one must know what they do. They leave their base at Umm Qasr under cover of darkness, in civilian clothes. They carry no identity cards. If the insurgents knew what they did, they would die - and their families too most probably.
With such danger, why do these

men put their lives on the line

Wahid rubs his thumb and finger together. "Money," he says.

"This job, good money."

The Iraqi sailor is generally better paid than his civilian compatriots (a teacher, for example, will earn perhaps barely half what a sailor or marine takes home every four weeks).

But there is more to this job than money.

The last time I visited Umm Qasr, the men carried out basic drills on the water and very tentative boarding They brandished paddles, not rifles. Some had uniforms, most

Today they have uniforms They have guns. They have ranks. They don't just board their own patrol craft on training exercises, they sweep tankers waiting to gorge themselves on the black gold pumped out of Iraq's oil terminals.

But the infectious, almost child-like enthusiasm – utterly unlike anything you might see at Raleigh or Dartmouth, and that's not to disparage those institutions – remains despite all that is dark

in this land. "I was a bit nervous before

coming out here," says Lt Cdr Toby Norman – also known as 'my friend in Iraq' by some of the locals.
"I wondered how friendly the

Iraqis would be towards someone who'd invaded their country.

"I should not have worried. I've been struck by their friendliness, by their hard work. They will do anything for you."

In the evenings, the Iraqis play football, they watch DVDs,

they tune into Coronation Street. 'A'right, Chuck," isn't quite a common phrase on the streets of

Umm Qasr just yet, but the soap does help the Iraqis' English.

And they talk. They talk a lot. In groups. They joke with the Brits about "jiggy jiggy" – seemingly an all-purpose phrase meaning paything from fin and having anything from fun and having a good time to, well, what young people do of an evening... (*Play Scrabble? – Ed.*)

But why the enthusiasm and

high spirits where many might

crumble?
"We enjoy our jobs. We want to

protect our country. We want to stop the smuggling," says Wahid. One day they will. On their own. They already patrol the length of the Khawr abd Allah into Umm Qasr – Iraq's *Voie Sacrée* – and eventually all Iraq's waters will fall

under their wing.

"Are you confident for the future?" I ask Wahid.

He raises his hands to the mess deck ceiling.

Allah karim. Allah karim. God





these pages. It is not an oil rig. There is no drilling here. There is no oil beneath its

rust-encrusted legs. It is an oil platform, a gigantic filling station if you like, where oil found in

mainland Iraq is pumped into tankers to take to refineries, mostly in the Gulf, some beyond it.

KAAOT was built by the Brits half a century ago as an outlet for Iraq's principal export.

Back then tankers were smaller. Much smaller. The ships filling up here can hold between 1.2m and 1.8m barrels of oil; tankers using the younger ABOT have a capacity upwards of 2.4m barrels.

Such numbers are meaningless to Joe Public, of course. Let's spell it out in

layman's terms.
One barrel of oil retails for \$96 (£48) So a KAAOT tanker brimming with oil carries goods worth more than \$172m (£86m)

And that's just one tanker. On our flight from Bahrain to the tip of the Gulf, a good couple of dozen of these leviathans could be seen milling

around, bound to or

which sank in Iranian waters in one of this

region's many conflicts. It now serves as an observation post for the Iranians - they've even built accommodation on it.

Here a bizarre 49th Parallel-esque game is played out. The Iranians on the crane watch the Allies and Iraqis at work on KAAOT... and the Allies and Iraqis watch the Iranians watching them. It's all very Cold War.

And what do the

all day? Outwardly

rickety, battleof the ladders have missing girders than have bent twisted, decking the

missing, the

Iranians stare at

KAAOT looks scarred. Some more attached. Huge a n d

to be pumped into a waiting tanker. In May 2006, a welder decided it would be a good idea to sit atop the tank and carry out some work. In the resulting explosions, the man vapourised save his hand, so too a colleague, and the 30,000-litre tank.

Yet despite such scars of war, neglect and carelessness, KAAOT still stands – and it still pumps out oil. It did so before the 2003 war. It does so after the 2003 war.

To ensure it does so safely securely, Commander Task Force 158 – guardians of the northern Arabian Gulf - direct operations, namely their

ago.

KAAOT. Iraqi marines scurry up and down the platform's bouncy walkways (the

metal has bent and warped over time). And the garrison goes to action stations. Regularly. Every time a boat - normally a dhow cutting corners to save fuel

metre

encroaches inside the 3,000-

exclusion zone

KAAOT,

the alarm sounds.

Yet in spite of these limitations, in spite of the rather spartan conditions aboard, the Brits, Aussies and Americans training the Iraqis are impressed.

"If you'd looked at these guys six months ago, they were wearing track suits and trainers. Now they're fully kitted out. One of the things you see here is a visible change," says Lt Cdr Richard Westoby, a former Royal Marine who transferred to the RAN.

Capt Will Parker RM of the Naval Transition Team adds: "The Iraqis know what they have to do. They want to work. They know what their responsibilities are. These platforms are Iraq's future."

● A Royal Navy RIB waits off KAAOT



● Descending into KAAOT... The sun sets over the KAAOT platform and (below) a Royal Navy/Royal Marines 'interaction patrol' chats with the crew of a dhow

Pictures: LA (Phots) Jannine Hartmann and Kelly Whybrow, FRPU Whale Island

Enterprise scores chart success

IT TAKES more than just security for KAAOT and ABOT to flourish. It takes safety too.

For months now, the Survey Motor Boat Pioneer and her mother ship HMS Enterprise have been moving laboriously, methodically through the waters around the two terminals, steadily gathering reams of

Enterprise's sister Echo laid the groundwork. The information she collected has already been used to update charts of the

But confined and limited though the waters of the northern Arabian Gulf are, that's only relatively speaking.

Echo could only cover some of these waters. Enterprise is plugging the gaps.

These waters shift.
Satellite wizardry provides stunning images of the sediment carried into the northern Gulf by the waters which dissect the Al Faw peninsula, especially the vast amounts carried by the Khawr abd Allah (into Umm Qasr) and the Shatt al Arab (to

Basra and beyond).

Already Enterprise has fixed tidal gauges to both terminals - they mariners what stream to expect when they come alongside the platforms.

like Echo before her. sonar kit is providing

stunning images of the seabed; beyond looking pretty, they allow the UK Hydrographic Office back in Taunton to improve the Admiralty Charts so respected by the world's sailors.

"Echo helped enormously by updating the charts. We hope we're providing the icing on the cake," says Enterprise's Executive Officer Lt Cdr George

And sometimes it's difficult applying that icing. Think of the Gulf and you imagine sun, sun, and yet more sun.

thunderstorms There are out here. Sandstorms. It can be chilly. And there are some peculiar, very local conditions to

"You see some real weather phenomena here. Outflow from the rivers mixed with the wind means you cannot launch the

boat. Move half a mile and you can, Lt Cdr Tabear Tabeart explains.

But when the sonar scanners are working, boy do they

work. The multi-beam side scanners on Echo sweep 65° either side of the hull of the ship and her motor boat.

Enterprise generally works in waters 20 metres down to 400 metres in depth, Pioneer - launched daily between 7am and 4pm - in waters between five and 50 metres deep.

The scanner takes references from 128 different data points. In a sweep in waters 20 metres deep, that means it's recording parts of the seabed roughly every 60cms.

In our December 2007 issue, we featured the wreck of a tanker captured by Enterprise's sonar and turned into an

impressive 3D image by stateof-the-art software aboard the

What that graphic did not convey was scale - the wreck was 300 metres long - or the importance of the work.

Previous research showed the top of the hulk lay 2.6 metres beneath the surface of the sea; it's actually nearly double that, five metres.

Such accuracy is what mariners value.

"Tanker crews trust Admiralty Charts," says Lt Cdr Tabeart succinctly.
"What we do is pretty much

unique. We are at the forefront of survey work not just in the Royal Navy, but also across the

"We're very much cutting edge.

 A fast patrol craft of US Navy Inshore Boat Unit 22 races past HMS Enterprise as she conducts a survey of the northern Gulf

'I am just helping to re-build my country...'

ALI IS an interpreter with the Naval Transition Team. He is currently applying for asylum in the West to escape the daily threat he and his family face to their lives. This is his story of life working for the Coalition.

BEFORE the war, I ran a small restaurant in Al Faw, mainly fish, making good money compared with many

Then came the war. Fellow Iraqis destroyed my restaurant. They took everything. I spent the next four or five months at home, no job. I drove a taxi for a couple of months until working as an interpreter for the police in Basra in 2005 – it was pretty good money, \$400 a month.

One day, 17 of my colleagues were kidnapped and killed within half an hour. Their bodies were dumped around

I was lucky. I was in a different car. But after that day, I quit for fear of assassination.

So I spent another six months at home, no job, fearing that the militia would come in and kill my family. One day two militia dressed in black, with long beards,

nasty faces, drove past my house four times in 15 minutes. After that I did not sleep for three nights. I spent three nights on the roof with my AK47 waiting for them.

I have done nothing wrong. I am just helping to re-build my country. But the militia consider us as agents of enemy

The life of an interpreter in Iraq is nothing. When I go home I do not feel safe. It is like sitting in a gangster's den.

All interpreters face the same difficulty. Sooner or later we know we will be killed.

Why do we still work? If I quit tomorrow, I would be at home, facing the same danger – but I wouldn't have the money. So I might as well work.

So this is my life. We are waiting for hope, but we don't know what hope is any more.



THERE'S been a final farewell to the 70s (shame - deputy Ed) in Devonport as the last stage of improving accommodation on the base

Naval Base Commander Cdre Simon Lister was at the 'helm' of the wrecking ball, as the demolition teams moved in on Benbow block - next to Drake's main gate.

The nine-storey block has been a part of the Devonport skyline for three decades. As well as being a 'triumph' of British post-war architecture, it wasn't much fun to live in – at least latterly as expectations of sailors changed.

Benbow is being flattened, the land around it landscaped, and 21st Century en-suite single room accommodation built in its place.

Replacing Benbow is the last stage of a four-year project, fittingly called Armada, (in Pompey a similar scheme was Project Emma), to single sailors based in Devonport.

By the time Armada is completed next month, more than 1,400 new single en-suite rooms for sailors of all ranks will have been built with laundries, kitchenettes, drying rooms, storage space and television

Do you know missing Kevin?

POLICE in Cambridgeshire hope the 12th anniversary of the disappearance of a former sailor might jog people's memories.

Kevin Mills spent two years in the RN, serving in HMS Charybdis, before returning to

Kevin left his home near Peterborough on foot on January 23 1996 – the day after his 24th birthday – and has not been seen nor heard from

Anyone who might know his present whereabouts or what happened to him is urged to call either Cambridgeshire Constabulary on 0845 4564564 or the Missing People helpline on freephone 0500 700700.

A tale of two cities... and warships from future destroyer HMS Dauntless paid their first official visit to the city

they will be bound to for the next 25 years. A dozen ship's company from the Type 45 warship, currently fitting out on the Clyde, left Scotland behind for a lightning tour of Newcastle.

Dauntless struck up her affiliation with Tyneside even before her launch with city leaders agreeing to the tie between Newcastle and the destroyer 18 months ago.

But only as Dauntless ship's company began to swell in numbers was it possible for the affiliation to blossom in earnest.

Many of those affiliations were previously upheld by the city's namesake destroyer which paid off four years ago, including Newcastle United FC, the Percy Hedley Foundation for people with disabilities, and city's hospitals.

The first port of call was St James' Park to link up with the Premier League side, then it was on to the Royal Grammar School for two presentations to children on the role of tomorrow's Navy and the ships which will be

The second day of the trip to Newcastle was devoted to the Percy Hedley Foundation, a charity which enjoyed a particularly fruitful

EIGHTEEN junior ratings

from HMS Campbeltown

trekked across the sands

of Oman in a bid to nurture

their fledgling leadership

All 18 sailors were singled out as almost ready to make the leap

to leading hand. But with extra

power comes extra responsibility, so the three-day Exercise Desert

Eagle was organised to ability to

Muscat from safeguarding trade at

sea under the banner of Operation

Calash, the potential leading hands were set daily challenges

by Campbeltown's Logistics Officer Lt Cdr Jonny Collacott, to

negotiate some of the mountains

The ratings were split into groups of six, handed maps, a

route card and description of the

looming over the Omani capital.

With the ship taking a break in

command and lead.

skills.

relationship with HMS Newcastle for 25 years. sailors joined youngsters in the classroom then knuckled down to some sport, although powerchair football is not something many of the matelots had played before.

'We've been looking forward to reinvigorating the relationships that existed with HMS Newcastle and strengthening the RN's link with the city," said Dauntless' Senior Naval Officer Cdr Giulian Hill.

"We've already taken part in the Great North Run and Remembrance events and we hope to get down to Newcastle on a regular basis to eep people updated on the ship's progress.'

And talking of progress, how is Dauntless faring presently? Well, after a series of tests for her systems at BAE Systems' yard in Scotstoun, she's due to conduct sea trials this autumn.

It will be February 2010 before she enters her home base of Portsmouth for the first time and the end of that year before she officially joins the Fleet, after which time she plans to pay her inaugural visit to Newcastle.

SAILORS from Dauntless' older sister Daring are already in the front line... although not necessarily with the destroyer.

One in ten Darings have been loaned to operational units to give them experience in diverse environments, including one weapons engineer working with Naval Party Iraq at

As 2008 opens, Daring's ship's company

is almost up to half strength, with the marine engineering department now fully trained to operate the destroyer's complex propulsion, waste and generator systems (the revolutionary nature of the ship meant some MEs were away on courses for a gruelling 35 weeks of last

The sailors have also paid a visit to their affiliated city, Birmingham.

They spent five days in England's second city, marching in its Remembrance parade, and taking part in several community projects before presenting Lord Mayor Randal Brew with a model of the ship for the council

On the business side of things, Daring puts to sea again at the end of next month for further sea trials before training and tests focus on the Type 45's jaw-dropping combat systems. The ship receives her first CO, Capt Paul Bennett, in May and finally hoists the White Ensign at

All three launched Type 45s can be seen in various stages of completion at BAE Systems Scotstoun yard. The youngest of the trio, HMS Diamond, receives her first sailor in the form of Senior Naval Officer Cdr Paddy Munns in the middle of 2008.

You can follow Daring's progress via her official website, hmsdaring.com



Vogue trader

WE'VE said on a number of occasions that Britain's amphibious forces are in vogue. Now they're in Vogue (groan - Ed).

It's not often you find sailors and green berets in the pages of the international fashion bible.

But flick through the pages of the Russian January 2008 edition (admittedly not typical reading fare in RN and RM messes and ward rooms) and you'll find a bevy of booties... plus a good few matelots as well.

Among the usual duties of sunset ceremonies, there was a request from Russian Vogue to clamber aboard for a fashion upcoming actresses.

Lisa Boyarskaya isn't exactly a

But in Russia, she's part of an acting dynasty on a par with, say, the Redgraves or Richardsons. She is also, says *Vogue*, "an ordinary girl with long, messy hair, a youthful smile and dimples

But we digress. The actress spent a day aboard Albion where the initially sheepish sailors and marines were soon enticed into taking part in the shoot, helped, no doubt, by (a) the presence of an attractive lady (b) the offer of autographs and (c) the offer of free tickets to see her perform on

Lisa also struck up a conversation with Albion's Capt Tim Lowe (described by Vogue as "the ship's imposing Commanding Officer") aided by her good command of the English

Their apparently earnest chat and exhorted the actress: "Lisa, smile. Tell him a joke. Smile for the camera.'

With thanks to Capt Garry Newton, Naval Attaché in Moscow, for translating the Vogue feature.

The reason? Last summer we reported on assault ship HMS Albion's visit to St Petersburg.

official visits, cocktail parties and shoot with one of their country's

household name in Blighty (you might remember her playing an hysterical German nurse in the film about the last days of Hitler, Downfall, a couple of years ago).

in her cheeks.'

stage that night.

language.

frustrated the *Vogue* photographer who wanted something rather more lighthearted from her muse

lectures and briefings about the art of leadership, but says Lt the slog through the Omani desert proved invaluable. Glamorgan back in the spotlight

study the route in the Omani mountains

"The team had all taken it in turns to be the leader and we

worked together to get through the highs and lows," she said.

"I definitely gained from the experience and now have the

confidence to complete the leading rates course. I'd never done anything like this whilst serving in

a ship before and I definitely think

they should organise more events like this."

All 18 junior rates had received

But they promised me Sat Nav... Logs Omar Gilchrist pauses to

THE nameplate and bell of the only British warship to survive 'ordeal by Exocet' can be seen at an exhibition commemorating the Senior Service's role in the Falklands conflict.

task ahead, then given a couple of

hours to plan the assault on the Jabal Akhdar and Jabal Shams.

in a small village in the foothills.

But with temperatures nudging

40°C, the climb becoming ever

steeper and the path through the

mountains ever narrower, the trek

became increasingly challenging.

Finally, the climbers reached the

summit... until Lt Cdr Collacott

told them it was a false summit – and there was still some way to

After five hours (and an even

steeper ascent), the sailors finally

reached the peak to enjoy some

stunning views of the Omani

and the descent is always easier

Wrong. The path going down was even narrower and the drops

precipitous, enough to cause ET(WE) Sophie Hurlo to shed

the odd tear so scared was she at

But guided by her shipmates, Logs Omar Gilchrist especially,

the sailor overcame her fear (and a ravine) and with her colleagues

eventually reached their transport

from the Leading Rates Command

Course 12 months ago because

its instructors felt she wasn't

physically ready for the challenge,

For Sophie, who was sent home

after eight hours on their feet.

than the ascent, right?

What goes up, must come down,

landscape.

It all began rather pleasantly

Thirteen men were killed when the French-made missile struck HMS Glamorgan just two days before the war for the South Atlantic islands ended.

Exocet had previously dealt fatal blows to HMS Sheffield and Atlantic Conveyor, but evasive action by the County-class destroyer helped to reduce the effect of the weapon's strike. It nevertheless wreaked havoc aft, sparking a fire which raged for

four hours. Glamorgan returned Portsmouth for repairs and returned to RN service before being paid off in 1986 and sold to Chile.

ship's and name plate ended up in Swansea Town Hall to commemorate ties between the Welsh city and the destroyer.

Now the two artifacts are in the hands of the Royal Naval Museum, which is displaying them in its Task Force South exhibition alongside a dummy AM39 Exocet, Glamorgan's foe 26 years ago.

"Those of us who were in Glamorgan in 1982 sometimes think we have been forgotten - perhaps because, luckily, the ship did not sink," said Capt Mike Barrow, Glamorgan's CO in the Falklands conflict.

"I am very pleased that the ship has now been acknowledged in the exhibition – not least to commemorate those members of the ship's company who did not return.

Besidesthenameplateand bell, visitors to Portsmouth can see a memorial window to Glamorgan's fallen in the city's Anglican cathedral.

Cdr Collacott, a practical team-

building exercise – particularly abroad where there are additional

challenges of climate, language barriers and different customs

- is vital for bringing out a sailor's

command qualities.
"All the team developed their

leadership and built on the training

they'd already received. This type

of expedition was enormously

valuable for the participants and

will be of benefit to all of them in

their careers in the near and long

Task Force South runs until February 29. The museum has also extended its exhibition championing the RN's role in stamping out the slave trade until the end of April.

Meanwhile, survivor of that fateful June day in 1982 is looking for help in learning more about Glamorgan's demise

The destroyer served for a dozen more years under the Chilean flag as Almirante Latorre before finally being paid off in 1998.

After several years awaiting disposal she was sold in the summer of 2004 and subsequently re-sold, possibly to an Indian firm. Reports suggest she sank under tow to a breaker's vard in 2006,

but few precise details are known. Andrew Forsyth, a WEM(R) back in 1982 who now runs the website www.hmsglamorgan info, is hoping a former shipmate or naval buff might be able to fill

in the blanks. He can be contacted at andrew. forsyth@hmsglamorgan.info

Sign here, please

TWO authors will be talking about their work and their experiences at signing sessions in the Royal Naval Museum.

Rear Admiral John Lippiett published letters to and from his wife Jenny during the Falklands, War and Peas, last

Elizabeth Matthews delved further back in time with the How She Prevented a War. It recounts American efforts to salvage HMS Resolute, lost searching for the explorer Sir John Franklin.

In gratitude for the Americans' efforts. Queen Victoria ordered timbers from the Resolute to be turned into a desk... which today sits in the Oval Office (it also features in the new Nicolas Cage blockbuster National Treasure: Book of Secrets).

Admiral Lippiet will be signing his book on Saturday February 9 from 11.30am; Ms Matthews will be in the Portsmouth museum on Saturday February 23 at 11am, when she'll have her guitar with her to sing some shanties.



PATRON: HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

The RN & RM Childrens is a National Charity based in Portsmouth. We care for children of men and women who have served or are serving in the Royal Navy and Royal Marines.

Originally set up as an orphanage, Monique Bateman we now assist children with a wide range of needs and at times of family crisis.

Applications can be made at any time. Those seeking assistance can contact the office direct for an application form:-

or Laurene Smith RN & RM Children's Fund 311 Twyford Avenue Portsmouth PO2 8RN

Telephone: 023 9263 9534 Fax: 023 9267 7574

Email: rnchildren@btconnect.com

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Reg Charity No 209776 Est 1865

NEARLY three years after they brought aid to the people of Sri Lanka, the men and women of HMS Chatham were formally honoured for their deeds.

In January 2005, the ship and RFA Diligence rushed to the aid of Sri Lankans whose lives and towns had been wrecked by the Boxing Day tsunami which devastated coastal regions from Indonesia to India.

The two ships arrived in Sri Lanka a week after the wave struck and found communities still in shock: 2,500 people in the Batticaloa region were dead another 1,000 were missing and 60,000 had been made homeless.

Teams from the vessels cleared debris, re-floated and repaired fishing vessels, restored power, organised fresh water supplies, tidied up schools, churches, hospitals and orphanages, and put

up a Bailey bridge.
All those deeds, and many more, earned Chatham the Firmin Sword of Peace (formerly the Wilkinson Sword of Peace, renamed after swordmakers Firmin took up the mantle when Wilkinson closed their doors in

The Sword of Peace is the highest honour bestowed upon a ship, formation or military unit in the British Armed Forces for good deeds around the world.

It was presented to current CO Cdr Martin Connell and his predecessor, Capt Steve Chick (now CO of HMS Illustrious) who directed the relief mission in 2005, plus Chatham sailors who took part in Operation Garron.

The citation for Chatham says the ship and her sailors "addressed much misery being suffered by the people of the Batticaloa district. Hope was restored to these proud people All members of the unit played their part and, without exception, found the task both rewarding and humbling."

Rainey days ahead

FIRSTLY some statistics.
There are 39,090 men and women in the

Ratings and other ranks in the Royal Navy and Royal Marines account for 31,410 of those.

A little over 800 personnel hold the rank of Warrant Officer, First Class.

And right at the top of the ratings tree sits Andy Rainey, the newly-appointed Command Warrant Officer - the father figure for all junior and senior ratings and other ranks.

It is a job with great power... and understandably great responsibility – the icing on the cake of a life in the RN which began within days of the 1977 Silver Jubilee reviews and continues today with Her Majesty still on the throne.

Of course, things in the RN have changed a little over those three decades...

Andy is a Falklands veteran whose career has been split between nuclear submarines, shore establishments, most recently, as Executive Warrant Officer of HMS Somerset and Base Warrant Officer of HMS Raleigh.

That latter post gave the 47-year-old Devonian an excellent insight into the young people signing

on for a life in the RN these days.
"If you look back to the 1970s, then we were all the same - all pretty much school-leaving age. Now we are seeing a much more diverse group of people bringing a huge amount of life experience to the RN," he says.

"But there is a constant thread. The Navy attracts people who want to do well, who want to do a good job. And if you do a good job, you are more likely to make progress in your career and earn more money.

"But there is also something else in the RN. Call it Naval ethos, a can-do attitude.'

Andy Rainey walked through the gates of Raleigh in June 1977. Actually, we say 'Andy' Rainey when we mean 'Mark'. For the first 16 years of his life, everyone knew him as Mark. It was only when he saw his birth certificate with Andrew Mark Rainey that he discovered his real name. To this day, matelots call him Andy, his family knows him as Mark.

With much of his career spent beneath the waves as a sonar operator and coxswain rather than riding them, Andy hopes to offer a deep's unique perspective on Senior Service life in the

higher echelons of the RN.

But, he says, it's important that he acts as the 'pan Navy' voice on issues affecting all ratings

and ranks - RM, RN, FAA, surface Fleet and

And that's quite a challenge. Different issues crop up at different times in different branches of the Services.

There is, it seems, one constant: operational tempo (perhaps unsurprisingly).
"Operational tempo is a key issue. Everyone

"But as far as I'm concerned commitments today are probably more interesting than they were in the Cold War, which wasn't that exciting. We have to keep people excited to keep them

Thirty years ago when he signed up for the Queen's shilling and the Cold War raged, there was no Command Warrant Officer (to be fair, the size of the RN back in 1977 probably made it impossible for a solitary WO to be the father

figure for all the ratings).

But as the Navy shrank, so says Andy "it became more and more evident that we needed

someone at the top of the ratings".

The result is the CWO, a post held to date by Eddie Seaborne and Vic Parsons. The job description is simple: to inform the Second Sea Lord about the opinions and concerns of RN and RM ratings and ranks and to ensure they are all thoroughly informed about issues affecting

them and the wider service.

Simple really. "We are changing 200 years of tradition, but it's vital that there are good communications between officers and ratings," says Andy. "It's something both my predecessors made great inroads into.

That means getting out and about, either alone or accompanying the Second Sea Lord and other senior officers. And the presence of Britain's most senior rating amid a galaxy of top brass can, at times, be an icebreaker.

"It's a good way to allow the lads and lasses to 'vent off' - something which they might not do to the same degree if there were only senior officers present," Andy explains.

"As far as I'm concerned, a problem shared is a problem halved. There's no such thing as a stupid question. If it's important to you, then it's important to me. I cannot, of course, always guarantee you will get the answer you're looking

If you don't catch Andy on his travels around the Fleet, you can email any issues you'd like him to look into via NavyStar at FLEET-2SLCNH



● As offices go, this one's got character... WO1 Andy Rainey sits for his portrait aboard HMS Victory, 2SL's flagship Picture: LA(Phot) Dave Jenkins

New Saab 9-3 Saloon range: Urban - from 16.7 (16.9) to 39.2 (7.2), Extra-urban - from 39.2 (7.2) to 64.2 (4.4), Combined - from 26.2 (10.8) to 52.3 (5.4). CO2 Emissions from 147 to 259g/km. New Saab 9-3 Convertible range: Urban – from 16.3 (17.3) to 36.7 (7.7), Extra-urban – from 36.7 (7.7) to 60.1 (4.7), Combined – from 25.4 (11.1) to 48.7 (5.8). CO₂ Emissions from 154 to 266g/km.

Model shown is Saloon Aero 1.9TTiD OTR £26,470 with optional ALU73 18" 10 spoke alloy wheels at £800. Military discounts are available to all serving members of UK Armed Forces, retired service personnel, MOD civilian personnel and HM Forces Reservists. The offer is also extended to the spouse/partner of the eligible applicant. No other marketing programmes apply. * New 9-3 Convertible Aero 1.9TTiD (180PS) auto.

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www.saab-military.co.uk/navynews

A FORCE FOR GOOD



• Trainees from the RN School of Mechanical Engineering at HMS

Make mine a makeover

THE Shipwrecked and Mariners Royal Benevolent Society collecting-box has had a spruce up at the hands of trainees at the RN School of Mechanical Engineering at HMS Sultan.

The collecting box, in actual fact a World War 2 mine, is once more a gleaming red and white, and in position to catch the eye of people coming off the Gosport

The society's chief executive Cdre Malcolm Williams said: "The Gosport mine is one of just 52 that we have remaining around

the coast of Britain.

"Originally the Admiralty gave the society over 200 surplus Mk 17 mines at the end of WW2

in appreciation for the support given to sailors during both wars, and they were installed at various seaside locations to act as collecting boxes.
"Time and the ravages of

the weather have reduced their number significantly, but those that are maintained by local volunteers continue to raise the profile of the society and generate valuable funds towards its work.

"The trainees from RNSME HMS Sultan, have done a really magnificent job with this refurbishment and we know their efforts will contribute greatly to the mine's ability to attract donations from visitors and locals



Sailors from HMS St Albans take a break south of the border

English break for St Albans

TEN cyclists from HMS St Albans set off to cycle 430 miles from Rosyth to St Albans in aid of the Mayor's Fund for the Future and the Royal British Legion.

The sailors worked in two groups of five, one team on the bikes and the other as support team, navigating and collecting money.

Organiser WO Marty Wallace said: "This was an excellent opportunity to raise some money for charity while encouraging health and fitness "It was hard work but good fun for all those taking part."

Their warship is currently mid-way through a 12-month refit in Rosyth.

Collingwood collects IN THEIR annual Hamper

Appeal, more than 1,000 items were gathered together at HMS Collingwood for Fareham Social

Boosted by collections in Marlborough Building and the Chaplaincy, the goods were put into hampers and handed out to the elderly and the underprivileged in the local community in time for Christmas.

Sarah Munro of Fareham Social Services said: "The peo-ple we deliver to think it's lovely and really appreciate that HMS Collingwood donates food items at this time of year, especially as most of the people in receipt of these hampers are ex-Service

It wasn't just those close to home who gained from Collingwood's generosity in the festive season.

Lt Kirsten Brooks organised Operation Christmas Child, gathering 50 shoe boxes full of presents to be distributed among deprived children in Eastern Europe and beyond.

Maria Owen, a support worker at the base's chaplaincy, said: "Each of these boxes was made with love and sent with love to a child in real need."

In 2006 over one million shoe boxes were sent from the UK to children in war-torn or disaster-ravaged countries by charity

Quorn cycles through pages of history

FOUR cyclists from HMS Quorn set out to cycle 530 miles across Europe from Dan Helder in Holland to Commonwealth and Graves Commission cemetery in Bayeux.

Conceived by Lt Cdr Steve Walton, the ride aimed to raise money for the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal and commemorate the previous HMS Quorn, a Hunt-class destroyer that was sunk off the coast of Normandy with the loss of 129 lives a few days after D-Day. The team – Lt Cdr Walton, S/Lt

Theo Stocker, CPOWEA Danny Fretwell, AB(Diver) Pete Birse on the bikes, and LS(MW) Mark Blake as support driver - notched up 90 miles on impeccable Dutch cycle paths on their first day.

From Rotterdam the team crossed the Erasmus Bridge over polders, sluices and bridges to Vlissingen in their second day of

"From there," said S/Lt Stocker, "the route took us over the Schelde estuary and out of Holland into Belgium, where the signposting language.
"Whilst the wind turned in our

favour, the rain began in earnest for a very damp, though picturesque, ride through Bruges.

"It was at this point that the historical aspect of the ride began, as they took in Passchendaele, with a visit to the World War 1 cemeterv at Tyne Cot, and the moving ceremony of the Last Post at the Menin Gate in Ypres.'

Muscles and cycles were starting to feel the strain, but the fourth day called the Naval cyclists to memorable stops at Lens, Vimy Ridge, Arras, the Naval Division Memorial at Beaucourt sur l'Ancre, and finally in Auchonvilliers.

Day five drew the cyclists into the heart of the Somme to



● AB(D) Pete Birse and CPOWEA Danny Fretwell lay a wreath at a Naval Division Memorial

Beaumont Hamel and Thiepval, where AB Birse found his great uncle's name inscribed on the memorial.

The sixth and penultimate day left World War 1 well behind as we enjoyed a sunny cycle along the banks of the Seine, crossing at the impressive Pont du Normandie to Honfleur," added S/Lt Stocker.

"The day ended at Pegasus Bridge where we were met by members of the ship's company who had travelled over for the commemoration service the next

day.
"All that remained for the final day was a 25-mile ride from Ouistreham, through a frost-laden Normandy dawn to the CWGC cemetery in Bayeux for a short commemoration service to the previous HMS Quorn."

The whole team completed the ride of 531 miles in six days at an average speed of 15mph, raising £3,000 for the RBL's Poppy Appeal.

Deeps are all heart

TEN submariners from the Royal Navy Submarine School ran 249 miles in a charity run between HMS Raleigh and London. Organiser WO Dermot

'Robbie' Roberts ran the first leg, despite having suffered a heart attack in 2006.

The submariner set out to prove to others in a similar situation that it was possible to recover and lead a normal life.

He said: "It's been a great week but very tiring. It wasn't just the

"All day we were out talking to the public while also giving lectures to local sea cadets in the evening and holding fund-raising

events.
"The Submarine Service is known as the Silent Service so we made ourselves available in each town to talk to people about what

we do.
"It's been non-stop but very enjoyable."

The team of ten consisted of four instructors from the Raleigh school and six trainee submariners, each man running about seven miles a day.

Their hard work has raised (2,889 for Southwest Children's Heart Circle.

Robbie said: "We wanted to support a heart-based charity in recognition of the support given

The charity, based at Bristol Hospital, works with children with cardiac problems who live in

Walk around the rock

IN GIBRALTAR, POPT Paddy Esler and the PT staff at the base got 100 people from the command and their families to commit to run one mile on the astroturf at Devil's Tower Camp and donate £5 to Children in Need for the privilege. Paddy said: "Military

personnel, mums and tots complete with prams, and even animals came out in force to achieve the aim by lunchtime.

"I'd like to thank everyone who took part on the day.'

The runners, walkers, and wheeled raised £500 in total.

Team up for Hospice

THE Rowans Hospice in Purbrook, that provides palliative care to patients in Hampshire, has gained £8,444 after the hard work of the Royal Navy, industry and MOD employees at Portsmouth Naval Base.

The money was raised by various means, including car boot sales, boxing events, entertainment and the Basin Run around the base.

Capt Chris Usborne, Captain Executive Personnel, said: "Portsmouth Naval Base is passionate about getting involved in events that will make a difference for others.

"We are delighted that the Rowans Hospice will be able to make use of these funds for their very valuable cause."

Lisbon last

MARATHON man Lt Cdr Steve Krosnar-Clarke has racked up a total of five marathons in 2007, completing his last in Lisbon in early December.

The officer took on the marathon challenge to raise money for Macmillan Cancer Support, a charity that helped his father when he was dying of stomach cancer.

Steve is hoping to match his marathon total with his fundraising total, seeking to raise £5,000 for the charity.

Find out more at www. justgiving.com/stevekc

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Dress up to splash down

Twenty-four divers from the Southern Diving Unit 1 dropped their usual dark rig in favour of a colourful array of fancy dress costumes for an all-day car wash at HMS Drake. Dracula, Little Red Riding

Hood, Batman and Superman all got hard to work with their buckets and sponges, encour-aging drivers to stop and make a donation of £3 for Breast Cancer

WO Robin Rickard said: "This has been a great success and as you can see by the colourful costumes all the team have entered into the spirit of the

thing.
"Business went well and we have had a lot of satisfied customers from across the Naval

"We are a busy operational unit and it is great that we have been able to find the time to raise money for such a worthy

The local Tesco in Plymouth donated wares to tempt more drivers into clean cars with a slice of cake...

Lusty looks

THE TYNEMOUTH Volunteer Life Brigade have benefited by £1,000 after a visit by HMS Illustrious' then CO Capt Tim Fraser.
The carrier's crew raised the

money through weightliftathons, fun runs and auctions among other activities. The brigade is a voluntary shore-based coastal rescue service, and is one of the last trained teams for ship-to-shore breeches buoy rescue.

Brigade chairman William Hogg said: "Receiving this donation is a great help. We have had a very busy year and this money will be used to fund our Land Rover which has all the equipment, including medical supplies, on board for cliff rescues.



WEBSITE Forces Reunited are selling 'Support our troops' bumper-stickers, with ten per cent of the cost going to SSAFA Forces Help. Each sticker costs just 69p, with

22p post and packing on top.

The stickers were inspired by a recent visit to the US by manager Justin Turner. He said: "Although the United States are a flag-waving country in every sense, they really get behind their troops whether they believe in the latest conflict

"Driving around the States recently it was amazing to see how many cars had some sort of support out troops bumper sticker.' Find out more at www. forcesreunited.org.uk

South Run

FOUR officers on the Principal Warfare Officers course at HMS Collingwood successfully completed the Great South Run.

Between them, Lt Cdr Matt Dodds, Lt Rob Pearce, Lt Cdr Andy Mason and Lt Carlos Garreta raised more than £1,500 for Cancer Research and the NSPCC.



• (Left to right) Rich and Will celebrate at the end of the marathon

Naval Base tackled his first marathon, the Loch Ness Marathon, under the guiding eye of Lt Cdr Rich New of HMS St Albans, a veteran long-distance runner.

The two decided to cover the distance dressed as pirates in a light-hearted nod to their maritime lives.

Together they completed the

course in three hours 51 minutes.
"It was a lovely day weatherwise," said Will. "The course was rather undulating for the first third, with some cheeky hills to negotiate, but we were rewarded at regular intervals with some brilliant scenery."

Rich added: "Nessie remained in her slumber for the second third, as the course flattened out during our run along the side of Loch Ness.

"Several people delighted in

18 miles – they weren't wrong.
"We climbed up from Loch
Ness for about two miles where a welcome jellybaby or two boosted our morale?

The two raised over £500 for the Scottish Veterans' Residences that support independent living for ex-Servicemen and women in

Bear bike

SIX Physical Training Instructors from HMS Temeraire got on their bikes for Pudsey Bear, cycling from the Army's school of Physical Training in Aldershot down to their home base of Portsmouth.

Rattling buckets along the way, the novice cyclists covered 45 miles and raised £300 for the BBC's Children in Need.

Gannet bridges over the gap

A SEARCH and Rescue Sea King from HMS Gannet was called in to a different type of rescue when it came to the aid of some old timber bridges in Ayrshire.

The two bridges on the Fairy Knowe trail near Barr village were suffering from wear and tear and in need of repair.

Working with the Forestry Commission Scotland and South Ayrshire Council, the Naval helicopter lifted and shifted two tonnes of steel beams and timber to one of the bridges which was isolated in some difficult terrain far from a road.

Forestry Commission Scotland's recreation manager Sandy White said: "Transporting this heavy steel work and timber over rough terrain from the forest road to the bridge site would have been extremely difficult - and taken

forever.
"What we needed to complete the job quickly was a helicopter and a skilled crew who were used to transporting heavy materials – this is where HMS Gannet came

to the rescue.
"They were keen and willing to help which was great.'

For the Gannet team, this was a useful exercise for training pur-

Angela Lewis said: "We were delighted to help Sandy and his

"We use their land for valuable helicopter training, but load-lifting is also something we are required to keep current in.
"Using these bridges for train-

ing purposes made things more challenging than moving drums, which is our usual training load.
"We were very pleased to be



HMS Gannet's Sea King lowers the bridge into place

able to help out on this project."

Safety and load-rigging was in the charge of a team from the Joint Air Delivery Test and Evaluation Unit based at RAF Brize Norton. dropped at the site, then the helicopter made several visits, bringing in nets of timber, lifting out the old timber bridge and dropping in the 12m-long steel framework on

Christmas cheer

L/Cpl Sean Keeling RM of 40 Commando was snowed under with thousands of parcels sent by family, friends, members of the Royal Marines Association, ex-Servicemen and well-wishers from across the UK for

Sean said: "The support from home has been unbelievable. Parcels contain everything imagi nable - toiletries, socks, confectionery, magazines and playing cards – are among the contents.

"All these items are much appreciated and give the Marines a treat at Christmas time.

The boxes and bundles were distributed throughout the forward operating bases in Northern Helmand, and efforts are made to reply to as many well-wishers as possible.

Major Alex Murray RM, second-in-command of 40 Cdo, said: "The public support this Christmas has been fantastic.

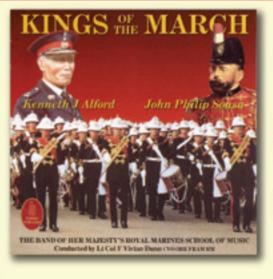
'We have received parcels from all sorts of people connected with the Royal Marines, such as our fabulous Royal Marines Association, as well as members of the public with little or no



L/Cpl Sean Keeling with a selection of the Christmas parcels

connection to the Royal Marines. To all of them we are incredibly grateful.

"I personally received a box of Harrod's teabags which had a note saying 'From an 80-year-old ex-para. Keep up the good work. 'I could just imagine this old veteran shelling out his pension money on what he saw as a decent cup of tea after a lifetime of drinking military tea."



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High boon in Wild West

DUST, DESERT, ROCK AND MOUNTAIN; in recent years these environments have become familiar battlegrounds for the Royal Marines and their allied units in 3 Commando Brigade. But despite its best efforts, Dartmoor can't quite bring this training to life in the same way as the lofty, dramatic landscape of the Sierra Nevada in America...

T'S been a couple of years since the separate elements of 3 Commando Brigade Reconnaissance Force have had a chance to work together on Op Herrick, work together on Op Herrick, but Exercise Royal Chamois 07 called together the spe-cialists of the brigade, both RM and Army, to the High Sierra of the United States. These are the guys who get up close and behind the enemy

line, judge the risks and send back word about what to expect - the Brigade Patrol Troop, recce engineers, beach and mountain specialists, electronic warfare and indirect fire control experts.

Major Chris Haw, officer commmanding the Brigade Reconnaissance Force (BRF), said: "The BRF trained along-side their US Marine Corps deep reconnaissance counterparts throughout and proved beyond

doubt the ability of the two units

to work side by side.
"This relationship is likely to develop in the near future.

"The combination of the cold mountains of the Sierra Nevada rising to 14,000ft and the high, rugged desert of Nevada provided the ultimate training ground for our operations."

With base camp at 8,858ft and all training to take place at this level or higher, the first week concentrated heavily on acclimatisation and essential mountain training – vertical assault and river-crossing drills.

"The normal stuff we do during standard mountain training in the UK," said Major Haw, "but at an altitude you can't get over

The US Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center is at Pickle Meadow, described as one of the Corps' most remote sites, set in the Toiyabe National Forest on the mountainous cusp of Nevada and California.

The second week saw the units separate to focus on their own specific drills, skills and standard operating procedures with 'Special to Arms' training.

However the close proximity to their Brigade colleagues meant that lessons learnt by other formations were fed into each unit's own drills.

A handful of the BRF got the chance to work with the experts of the High Desert Special Operations Centre (HDSOC), law enforcement and military veterans who set up specific training

courses for special operations.
"The opportunity given to the Marines was exceptional," said Major Haw. "The course was run by US ex-Special Forces guys with an amazing wealth of knowledge.

"We saw cave clearance which was impressive."

As well as the caves, the Marines were put through their paces in room and building clearance using 'simunition' weapons - "Like a paintball but actually a round. It hurts when it hits," added PO(Phot) Dave Husbands.

All the ranks taking part in this select training described it as exceptional, gaining various new techniques that would be used during future

stints in theatre.

The empty wilderness of the High Sierra offered to the British marines and soldiers a two-week package of range skills, including day and night team assaults and break contact drills as the troops swiftly broke off from fierce battle.

Once the range work was completed, the units were called together into a single tenday exercise, sharpening their newly-learnt skills and honing their established routines.

At the end of the six weeks, the men of the BRF had forged once more a fierce, professional fighting force prepared for the high and harsh terrain of the world's current hotspots.

world's current hotspots.

Lt Col Rob Magowan, commanding officer of UK Land Force Command Support Group, said: "It was both challenging and realistic, testing the specialist on the ground, in close target reconnaissance, and the intelligence HQ.

"During the final exer-

"During the final exercise, based on experiences in Afghanistan, a high number of complex ISTAR (Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition And Reconnaissance) feeds were fused by the ISTAR head quarters, and the information was delivered to the right person at the right time.

"This intelligence guided the execution of two deliber-ate strikes against enemy positions."

He concluded: "The exercise was a huge success.

■ Units taking part in Exercise Royal Chamois 07 included: 539 Assault Squadron RM; 59 Independent Commando Royal Engineers; Light Dragoon Guards; Queens Dragoon Guards; and specialist branches of the Royal Marines such as Mountain Leaders.

• (clockwise from top) 539 ASRM conducting a beach rec-ce; the US Marine Corps about to do building clearance drills; 59 Ind Cdo Regt take people through a day on the explosive range; and members from BRF conduct cave clearance under the guidance of HDSOC

Pictures: PO(Phot) Dave Husbands





OLD and bold sea dogs of yore could easily be away from home waters for years on end.

Neither did they have the benefit of modern communications nor aircraft.

But whatever the expectations f the different generations, a circumnavigation is still a considerable undertaking for man (and woman) and machine, and there are bound to be times when people feel isolated - half-way across the Pacific, for example.

Which is why the Royal Navy ensures that the wellbeing of its sailors are catered for, both body and soul. When

HMS Monmouth undertook her nine-month plus Volans 07 deployment, she took with her a doctor and a chaplain.

Surg Lt Alex Wrigley joined the frigate in Brunei at the beginning of June last year, taking over from Surg Lt Nick Leather, and stayed with her until the end of the deployment in December.

The age profile of the ship meant that Alex could expect a substitute healths banks banks to be footbare.

relatively healthy bunch of sailors. but he had to be ready for almost

anything.
"The kind of things you get are fractures, because there are lots of potential hazards aboard a warship at sea," he said.

"But there is also a full range of other medical problems – just not in the volume you would expect

The ship's doctor is akin to a family GP back on shore.

"The day-to-day work is primary care, with a little bit of vaccination, guarding against the sun and malaria, and so on," he said.

As in the case of a GP, if there is a more serious problem, then the

help of specialists can be sought.
"When we are abroad, the RN will pay for whatever is appropriate

locally," said Alex.
"The Americans have been absolutely fantastic, both in Hawaii and in Japan.

"When we have been staying in an American establishment, we have found their medical facilities to be fantastic, and they have offered us more help than we could need. I am personally very grateful for that."

Being the RN, Alex does not have the luxury of just one job



– during Volans 07 he took his turn on the rota for Visit Liaison Officer (VLO).

"I was VLO for Okinawa and Hawaii – the job cycles through the wardroom," said Alex.

"It starts about six to eight weeks before you get there, because you are the focal point for all departments on board to make sure there is no overlap.

"It is a job of a lot of very small parts – a lot of liaising with lots of different people and emailing different agencies.

"It is hectic - things come up plans change and you need to call on services you didn't think you would need before.

'You need to sort things out, but we are often dealing with agents, who are very helpful."

While Alex looks after the sailors' physical ailments, ship's padre John Thompson-Vear also helps keep the crew in fine fettle.

Father John – or the Bish in Naval parlance – did two stints on Monmouth, from February to May and September to November, fitting in a spell on Montrose in the Mediterranean in between.

"At the beginning of the deployment there are a lot of people coming away from home for the first time," said John.
"Things arise, and it's useful to

have someone on board they can talk to in complete confidence, which is particularly special.
"I suppose when the deployment

turns from the mid-point to

coming home other issues arise.
"People are thinking about going back home to any issues which might be bubbling away there, which might be on people's minds.
"I think Monmouth had a reputation as a very happy ship,

and it is still a very happy ship. "This deployment has not done

anything to dampen this. "It is a long time away, but for the guys on board visiting some amazing places has helped to offset being away from home.

"Generally speaking, morale seems to be very high on this

ship."
The 'churchy' side of things Sunday services, memorial events ashore and so on – are not the main part of John's role.

"The main thrust of my work

word or bit of conversation, and that is all people want to do.

daily would be pastoral.

"Sometimes it's just the odd

"Some people can only effectively go deep for a short time Picture: LA(Phot) Brian Douglas

and then come up. That is what they are comfortable with. "Others need to spend more time on it. That is what I am here for, to see people when they need to, even if it is daily.

"Otherwise just generally being around the ship, kind of earning trust and showing that you are there for the people on board.

"People sometimes say you must be too busy but we are here to spend time with people, to help build bridges, and people know we are there if they need a particular issue to be addressed.

"If this ship was to go into a conflict zone those bridges will have been built, and if people are under stress they can feel happy to come and see the chaplain."

John has no formal rank on board, though he is a member of the wardroom.

"I can go straight to the junior rates' dining room if necessary - which can be handy if you miss breakfast – but I do not go barging

in," he said.
"We have got to respect that the messes are these guys' homes. "All doors open, and I am

generally welcomed wherever I go. "I am a friend and adviser to all on board."

Bones, Bish and Jimmy the One

WHILE Bones (the ship's doctor) and Bish (the padre) are looking after the welfare of the crew, the Executive Officer – Jimmy the One is doing the same for the ship.

Although the CO has overall responsibility, someone has to make sure the day-to-day running of the ship goes smoothly.

"My role is to let the Captain not have to worry about any detail or anything that's happening on board," said HMS Monmouth's XO Lt Cdr Paul Bristowe.

"He can look upwards and outwards to look at our interaction from the ship and with HQ, and I can take charge of co-ordinating all activities on board and getting into the detail of it.

"But that is massively supported by the Heads of Department.

"The real detail is done by them I sit over them to make sure it's properly co-ordinated, and I try to resolve any conflicts at that level." A deployment such as Volans 07

gives XOs plenty of opportunities. Paul shared conduct with his CO, Cdr Tim Peacock, on numerous exercises and operations, and drove the ship on several occasions.

"In common with every other XO I would like a drive," he said. "This is not warfighting, like

the guys in the Gulf, but you make the most of what you are given. "This happens to be a job which is very, very rewarding and

satisfying as well.
"I have been in 19 years, and this is the first chance to circumnavigate.

"There is massive kudos in going around the world - I have been envious of my buddies from Naval Task Group 2000 ever since.

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A LEADING SPECIALIST IN MILITARY LAW

Christmas presence... Charlie Company's Sgt Pete Leahy from Woking sets out on patrol around Kajaki at 4.30am on December 25

Pictures: LA(Phot) 'AJ' Macleod, 40 Commando

mea

THEY came unseen.

In darkness, they glided silently across the Kajaki reservoir, their assault boat gently nudging the sand on the opposite shore.

The men tumbled out, creeping and crawling their way to within a few yards of Taleban strongholds. And then, with strongpoints identified and intelligence gathered, the the men slipped back from whence they came.
For the first time in

Afghanistan, Royal Marine Commandos carried out amphibious raid in a bid to dislodge insurgents from one of the country's most important pieces of infrastructure.

The Kajaki dam and its environs were wrestled from Taleban control 12 months ago, but insurgent activity

The 50-year-old dam is responsible not merely for providing power to Helmand and beyond, but also water for homes and farms via an intricate irrigation network.

With Taleban dug in around the huge artificial lake behind the dam, the Royals of Charlie Company, 40 Commando, decided upon a new tactic to unnerve their foe.

Making use of some Rigid Inflatable Boats provided by the Gurkhas, the Royals resorted to their core expertise: amphibious operations, 700

miles from the nearest

open water. "It would have been shame to come a theatre such as Afghanistan and never used those skills that we have trained long and hard for," said Capt lain Sutherland, for," said Capt lain Sutneriano, Charlie Company's Second-in-

Command. Armed with SA80s, sniper rifles and machine-guns, the Royals slipped behind the Taleban lines to outflank the insurgents.

"Amphibious operations like this not only allow us to surprise the enemy from a different flank but also give us access to local nationals previously thought to be unreachable, which is key to the success of this ongoing operation," Capt Sutherland explained.

unconventional unexpected methods of movement, we can interact with more civilians as well as significantly disrupting the Taleban in our area, denying them freedom of movement."

Elsewhere in Helmand, the green berets have been doing what green berets do best: growing 'taches.

An almost obligatory accompaniment for any NCO (just flick through images of the Falklands conflict) the moustache has perhaps

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Kajaki

been in decline in the Corps in the 21st Century.

Determined to revitalise the tradition of top 'taches, 40 Commando's deputy commander Maj Alex Murray urged his men to down razors for their six-month tour of duty in Helmand, explaining that "a good 'tache has proved essential in maintaining the stiff upper lip". upper lip". He continued: "Daily the

marines and soldiers of 40 Commando are performing amazingly brave acts alongside our comrades from the Afghan National Army and Police and life can be pretty intense.

"Bits of fun like this go a long way to defusing the tension and keeping everyone cheerful in an environment that is otherwise deadly serious."

Nowhere was that fine line between gaiety and gravity more

evident than around Kajaki on Christmas Day.
Charlie Company left camp at 4.30am for a five-hour patrol around the town – during which time they were subjected to Taleban fire; they responded in kind, naturally.
The skirmish over, the Royals returned to Kajaki. And as they did, they doffed helmets and donned Santa hats for the final mile back to base camp.



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• Troops from Charlie Company return from their night-time amphibious recce at Kajaki in a RIB loaned and driven by the Gurkhas and (right) a commando surveys the Kajaki terrain during the Christmas Day patrol



• Spidey-hi... Ship's doctor Surg Lt Cdr Matthew Turner (plus Spiderman beeny hat) takes a few shots for the family album as Endurance approaches James Ross Island and (left) up close and personal with one of Deception Island's chinstrap penguins

YEP, it's 'pingu' time again.

Just as the men and women of HMS Endurance cannot resist taking pictures of these comical, smelly (and sometimes slightly irritable) birds, so we cannot resist publishing them.

There is, of course, so much more to the Red Plum's time in and around Antarctica than

pausing for a penguin portrait.
For a start, there's unfinished business from the ship's 2006-07

business from the ship's 2006-07 season among the ice.

Twelve months ago, Endurance began stockpiling equipment and stores for the British Antarctic Survey on Mount Haddington, a sprawling 5,200ft high extinct volcano on James Ross Island – which just happens to be the focal point of a key BAS study.

which just happens to be the focal point of a key BAS study.
 More than 20 scientists and field assistants from the Cambridge-based research organisation, plus 20 tonnes of equipment were ferried to the Antarctic by the Red Plum.

Once safely arrived, there was the small matter of moving men and matériel from ship to shore.

Endurance's two Lynx helicopters from 815 NAS – one flown by a crew who have experience of operating in the Antarctic and ded Antarctic – added more than 3,000 miles to the odometer ferrying BAS kit on to the volcano, a mission which demanded Herculean efforts by the whole ship's company in moving the equipment around the ship ready ICE survey ship HMS Endurance has completed her first work period in the Antarctic as an 18-month deployment to the Southern Hemisphere begins in earnest.

Boulind, Flight Ops.
"You have to work with
Antarctica and it will decide when you can move and when you can't.
The challenge of flying to such a high altitude in such extreme conditions is something that you can never really appreciate until you get here."
The reason for all that effort is

series of experiments by the BAS team.

The scientists are spending two months drilling into the Antarctic ice.

Now for the science bit...

Imagine the bubbles in an Aero bar. Within each bubble is a changeable mixture of gases making each bubble a miniature time capsule.

The deeper you go, the further

back in time you go.

By the time the scientists reach the bottom, they have gone back 12,000 years and the information gathered will show how the planet has changed.

All the ice cores will be brought back to Endurance for returning to the UK. The ensuing research will be fundamental to our understanding of the impact of climate change to our planet.

Another team of boffins is looking even further back in time. Fossilised clams and scallops

ice on the perilous approaches to James Ross Island

before the Deputy Ed was born - Assistant Ed) are being collected to look at how they thrived in an age when the 'frozen continent' was actually the 'tropical continent' with a climate akin to the Caribbean.

And yet more scientists are wading through mud and soil samples to study Antarctica's unique species of fungi and endemic bacteria.
With the earth's temperature

having risen 3°C in the past half century, so activity by these fungi and bacteria increases - and with it the amount of carbon dioxide they produce.

Away from the mainland, the Red Plum has been using her hitech sonar and survey equipment to update navigational charts around the Antarctic. That mission has taken on

extra significance in the wake of two serious accidents involving cruise ships in the past year.

Endurance came to the aid of MV Nordkapp when it ran aground at Deception Island.

There was nothing anyone could do, however, to save the MV Explorer which sank after

for lifting by the two helicopters.
"The biggest challenge was
the weather," explains Lt Matt from 10 million years ago (just striking an iceberg late last year • 'The terrible blighting wall of ice' - (above and left) the huge cliffs of



(all her passengers and crew were rescued, thankfully).

'Ice tourism' is an ever-growing phenomenon, but it is not without its dangers.

"Surveying in Antarctic waters is one of the greatest challenges for the hydrographic a n d meteorological community today" explains Charge Surveyor Lt Cdr Colin

Thompson.

"My team is out on the ground, on glacier and hillsides, measuring the exact position of the land in relation to the sea, and have to guarantee the quality of their work even when it is -20°C, and I am very proud of their professionalism ention to detail."

even when it is -20°C, and I am very proud of both their professionalism and attention to detail."

For many of the ship's company, this has been their first time in Antarctica and the moment they saw the ice will remain with them forever.

Apart from awe-inspiring

Apart from awe-inspiring scenery, there is an abundance of wildlife: in the first two days among the ice Endurance's sailors counted three species of penguins, four varieties of seals and more than 20 humpback whales.

"Even the most amateur

"Even the most amateur photographer will be going home with stunning pictures, let alone our Navy-trained one who has captured some fantastic images," said Surg Lt Cdr Matthew Turner, Endurance's doctor, public

relations officer and sometimes her (unofficial) photographer.

The icebreaker takes her name from Shackleton's legendary Antarctic exploration vessel, crushed by the ice 90 years ago. Her crew sought shelter on the less-than-

the less-thanhospitable
shores of
Elephant
Island (named
not for large-eared
mammals but for
the elephant seals
prevalent in these
parts).

Nine decades on, the son of S hackleton's physicist Reginald James saw the unforgiving place where his father was marooned for four months in 1916.

One of the Red Plum's Lynx flew Viv James over the rocky outcrop (rough seas prevented the sea boat taking Mr James ashore, while the presence of several thousand Adelie penguins prevented the helicopter from touching down) but simply seeing Elephant Island stirred strong emotions.

"Icannot thank the Navy enough

for bringing me somewhere that has been part of my life for so long and I never dreamt that I would actually see it," said Mr James.

"It seems very ironic that my father arrived in an open boat in awful conditions, and I get to fly in."









A 'first' for knowledge

to reading slowly the excellent articles on Passchendaele and the RN division, and the Uganda (October)

It is very dangerous to say anything is the 'first.' I much prefer it when you say 'believed to be...' Thus the comment in the Uganda hospital ship article that the Falklands campaign was the first time Wrens served at sea is inaccurate.

Please see your own Navy News 2003 for an item about Wrens at sea in WW2. This prompted further correspondence from other Wrens who'd served with and in similar ships in WW2, also reported in *Navy News*.

- Ken and Sue Napier,

Chazarem, Beaugas, France

Meals on keels

HERE are a few more of the meals off Pusser's menu to add to George Sexton's list (letters, December):

Bunny Food – salad Car Smash – tinned tomatoes Chicken Chernobyl - extremely

hot curry Cow Juice – milk Dockyard Tortoise - Cornish

pasty Elephant's Footprints – spam fritters in batter Grenade – Scotch egg NAAFI Landmine – pork pie Spithead Pheasant – kipper

Train Smash – car smash with - Brian Johnson, former RO(T) HMS Danae, Edgbaston, Birmingham

Mr Johnson's list ran on to 37, so I only chose the most tasteful examples – Ed

Navy's image

IN REPLY to K Miller's letter (January) about saluting guns and dress and image, it's all about health and safety and hard hats.

But is the Royal Navy really concerned about the image it projects to the public?

Last December HMS Middleton came back from the Baltic and HMS Southampton came back from the Falklands.

Later that day at Portsmouth Hard, some ratings were going on leave with their families, dressed in working rig (No.8s) and foul weather jackets.

What happened to No.1s, or No.3s, red badges, silk and medal ribbons, or civilian clothes?

How could a Master-at-Arms or a coxswain let his ship's company go on leave like this?

– E P Booker, Southsea, Hants

Belfast's back

HMS Belfast hit a magnetic mine off the Isle of May in the Firth of Forth, not Scapa Flow, as Ken Buckingham stated (letters, January).
She was firing 6in guns at a

towed target in November 1939. The ship was towed to Rosyth Docks and when docking her back was broken.

A cradle was fixed and she was towed to Devonport in 1940. - George Woodley, Isle of Wight

Mysteries of ^o the deep

WITH reference to your piece Opinion about Navy divers (January) I became a Navy Diver (unqualified) in 1940 when HMS Resolution was torpedoed at Dakar and was towed into Freetown by HMS Barham.

One of Resolution's divers relinquished his diving rate and I volunteered to help the other.

It was the best thing I ever did

during my time in the Navy. For about six weeks I carried out small diving jobs and was beginning to enjoy it, so 18 months later when I returned to Chatham I was able to qualify at the diving school at Gillingham Pier.

Once qualified I served on several ships until in 1951 I was due to be released, but the Korean War had started, so I was drafted

war nad started, so I was drafted to HMS Belfast as chief diver. During this time I was mentioned in despatches for recovering a body from a crashed RAF bomber in Singapore and for assisting in clearing the starboard propeller of HMAS Warramunga

off the coast of North Korea.

When Belfast came back to Chatham in 1953 I left the Navy and became a commercial diver. I was then asked to join the Historical Diving Society and carried on giving diving shows throughout the country until a few weeks ago I hung my boots up at

85 years of age.

When I started diving in the RN, I was the youngest diver at 17, and when I retired I was told I was the oldest standard diver in the UK and I was still diving using the standard helmet equipment.

I have appeared on TV, diving with the Historical Diving Society on several programmes, including Coast, Bargain Hunt and Animals at War, all using the standard helmet diving equipment which causes a great deal of interest.

The society does its utmost to keep the diving of the Royal Navy in the public eye as much as it can

- Jim Hutchison, Diver 1st Class, Gillingham, Kent

I LIKE to remember the legendary Buster Crabb (Navy News, January) as he was in the early 1950s, when he was in his early 40s and as fit as a butcher's dog.

He had good muscle tone and respiration and I do not recall that he smoked to excess or was particularly addicted to drink.

He enjoyed life and he gave time to explain diving to children up in Scotland and when we were alongside at Woolwich.

He was constructive and helpful in the Severn Estuary when we were looking for a crashed de Havilland plane along with HMS Venus and several MFVs.

I am not concerned with the speculative puff which continues to surround him, but I think a more balanced picture of his



personality is in order.

Lt Cdr L K P Crabb was a remarkable man, he was a patriot and a pioneer and he was not short on courage.

I found that he had a pleasing personality and that he would talk about the early days and the Davis escape apparatus and diving in ordinary bathing trunks, unlike the Italians who had underwater breathing sets and rubber suiting.

He also kept in touch with some of the IX Flotilla who joined his

He died in Portsmouth Harbour in 1956, diving on oxygen in a normal dry suit, he had inflammation of the bronchial tubes and green phlegm and he did not go deep.

His head was seen twice as he swam away and it was a long, cold

The Russians also reported to have had a glimpse of a frogman's head and shoulders.

Much of his body, preserved in the dry suit, was found in Chichester Harbour 48 days later in June and as it was lifted into the cutter his head dropped off and it was not until ten years later that it was recovered from the same

I went to the funeral and also the interment of his head after a Requiem Mass in Portsmouth Cathedral, he had converted a few years before to Roman Catholicism.

He is the only person I know that had two 'funerals' and he had the last laugh on us all.

May he rest in peace.

- Gerald Morris, former diver, Waverton, Chester

I WAS being drafted between Collingwood and Dolphin and remember the football match against the Russians at Pitt Street. When the Russian ships departed, rumour was rife that the Russian lead ship dropped her 'hook' to rip up a cable laid between Vernon and Dolphin.

And a ship's signature being allimportant in those days it makes sense, but would also imply that Russian divers were active during the ship's stay.

It gives another thought to Crabb's disappearance, but I haven't seen it referred to.

- Keith F Willifer, former EM, St Neots, Cambs

Our Armed Forces need resources

WHAT a difference a year makes. IN last February's Navy News, a headline read: "We won't mothball the Fleet," as you reported on an interview with the Prime Minister.

Of course not.

Admiral Band was quoted as saying just a few weeks ago that the funds allocated for Defence by the Treasury would increase by a mere 1.5 per cent in real terms every year over the next three years.

Press reports last autumn suggested that the "MOD fears £1bn shortfall for equipment"

Not only have we seen the cost of major current projects now in development increase by well over that budgeted by the Treasury, but the numbers being acquired reduced markedly from those first

proposed, which presumably were agreed on the basis of need by the Services.

the ever-increasing demands being placed on the Services by politicians and the reductions being forced on them in both equipment and personnel, it is a tribute to the resourcefulness of those defending the realm that so much is being achieved for what appears to be so little acknowledgement.

To mention just one area of avoidable waste we find the Armed Forces being used to destroy heroin poppies in Afghanistan while the NHS is desperately seeking to find sites to grow them to provide

morphine supplies.

- Anthony G Phillips,

No reward for awards

the letter about the Pingat Malay medal (January), it really did speak volumes about the way the

RN goes about presenting awards. I was part of Naval Party 1810 serving on the Stena Seaspread during the Falklands conflict, and we spent all our time within the exclusion zone.

For this we were awarded the South Atlantic Medal, as were many others.

The difference being that my medal was presented to me by a leading writer and I was asked

"sign here, Chief" to receive it.
I recall being slightly incensed at seeing Prince Charles awarding the Welsh Guards with their medals. The Army seem to set great store by the way they hand out their awards.

The most irritating thing was that our CO of NP1810 was

awarded, I believe, the DSO at Buckingham Palace. He took great regard in saying:

"I was awarded this medal on

behalf of us all."

If the DSO was for all our efforts, when is it my turn to

- Andrew Timpson, former Chief Ordnance Artificer (CWEA in new money) Birchington, Kent

WE MURMANSK Convoy veterans had the same trouble with the MOD re: our Russian Commemoration medals as Jock Campbell with his Pingat Jasa Malaysia medal.

We wear our medals where we please. If the MOD jobsworths don't like it – well hard luck.

We aren't in the Andrew now, so the Jaunty can't run us!

- Maurice Cross,

Walcheren remembered

SINCE my letter was published in November I've had a number of

responses from veterans who took part in the Walcheren landings. One stands out as it was from a fellow I haven't seen since that day, whose craft, LCF 36, came alongside at great risk, so we were able to carry the wounded and pass them over.

It was bobbing up and down like a cork – one slip and it was certain

death by crushing, so it was not for the faint-hearted.

I have often wondered if the ones who gave the order for the operation ever gave a thought to what effect it would have on us who came out

alive.

If today's standards had applied, heads would have rolled – though saying that, this present government is not squeaky clean as regards World War 2 disabled veterans applying for pension credits.

— Alf Neil, Bute Wynd, Kirkcaldy



It's a Doges life

CAN any reader identify this photo of a City class cruiser?

The picture has an Italian stamp on it and was obviously taken in

Venice outside the Doges Palace. I have tried using a magnifier to read the nameplate on the

quarterdeck, but to no avail. - Tom Hay, Turriff, Aberdeenshire

NAVY recruiting adverts tend to show drug busts in the blue water of the Caribbean, rather than fishery protection duties in the grey North Sea.

This is the nature of advertising, and it seems naive to suggest that young people don't see beyond the image, as the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust has suggested in its report into Armed Forces recruiting.

The report claims the Forces often don't even meet the parents of minors, and "largely depend on the socially and economically vulnerable to enlist for negative reasons.

Well, yes. Infantry regiments have traditionally taken boys from the poorest backgrounds and given them a readymade family, three meals a day, excellent training, and an unaccustomed sense of self-worth. Navy training establishments take endless trouble to

engage with the families of their young recruits. Most junior sailors are bright young men and women quite

capable of forging a good career outside the Navy, but they have their reasons for joining.

Training and career development may be among them, but who knows, they may also be inspired by those qualities of comradeship, honour, and patriotism, which seem strangely old-fashioned to some, but which still strike a chord with

many young people.

Leviathan Block, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH

NAVY NEWS

Business

February 2008 no.643: 55th vear **Editorial**

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Subscriptions 023 9273 e-mail: subscriptions@ e-mail: subscriptions@ navynews.co.uk Accounts 023 9272 0686 Advertising 023 9272 5062 or 023 9275 6951 e-mail: advertising@ navynews.co.uk Distribution 023 9282 9065 Fax 023 9283 0149

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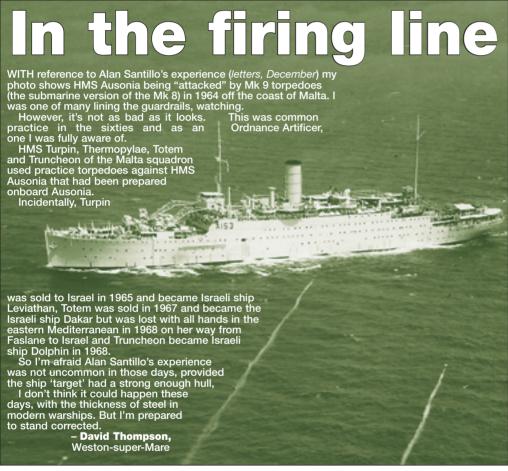
this information.

telephone.

Letters cannot be submitted over the

Given the impres-

volume





Helping Hans

THE Grand Admiral's flag from the World War 1 German cruiser Emden (pictured above) has been handed back to the Germans after it went missing at Scapa Flow.

Now the search is on for the ship's bell, which was also lost when the Germans were scuttling I am sure somebody.

somewhere, must know or have information on it. Can anybody

- Betty Hockey, Bournemouth

The Emden flag lay hidden in a London house for years after a British sailor from HMS Shakespeare clambered on to the enemy ship and took it as a memento in 1919 when the Germans scuttled their fleet.

He hid the flag under his tunic and kept it in his attic.

It was handed back to the German Navy at a ceremony in Devonport last December - Ed

Hardly the thanks of a grateful nation

IT IS with some anger that I write to you regarding my son. I served in the RN in World War 2 and was very proud when he too joined to serve his country in 1974-75. At his passing-out I was

After serving 32 years and now a lieutenant commander, he has to retire at the age of 50.

His reward for all those years serving in the Falklands, the Gulf and many parts of the world is my reason for writing this letter. as been given a (A4 size) printed certificate with no n

or signature. His name was written on to the certificate and signed by an Able Rate writer in his presence. This was then handed to him, together

with a veterans' lapel badge. Personally I was disgusted; this is not the Navy I was proud to

serve in. Is it common practice now? At least when I was demobbed, I got a demob suit and trilby.

D Benson, Blurton, Stoke-on-Trent

Lt Cdr A J Bennett, desk officer for the divisional system policy, looked into this and told Navy News: "I established that this officer inadvertently received a Valedictory Certificate which is issued to

"The certificates introduced in April 2005 are facsimile signed by the Second Sea Lord for those who have completed four and half years or more service in the Royal Navy and not unsigned as stated in the

"For ratings completing a pensionable engagement the Second Sea Lord personally signs those certificates (some 40 each month) and they are to be presented framed (which the Pusser pays for) in the last unit in which the rating serves to formally recognise the personal commitment they and their families have made over a long career." LETTERS to the editor should letters, we cannot publish all of your by always be accompanied correspondence in Navy News. We look particularly for correcorrespondent's name and address, not necessarily spondence which stimulates publication. debate, makes us laugh or raises E-mail correspondents are important issues. also requested to provide

Please try to keep your submissions as brief as possible – our space is limited.

The editor reserves the right to edit your submissions.



ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY

MEMBERS, wives and guests of the Redruth and Camborne branch gathered in the upstairs lounge of the Redruth British Legion for

their pre-Christmas meeting.
The usual 'bring and share' supper was well-supported, and all enjoyed the obligatory tots of rum.

The same venue was due to host the branch's annual general meeting as Navy News went to

This will also be the last occasion at which names can be added for the annual dinner dance.

SELSEY branch has marked the 30th anniversary of its formation.

In January 1978 17 shipmates and seven guests were there for the inaugural meeting.

Over the three decades more than 200 members have joined the Selsey ranks, although age and relocation have taken their

Today the branch still boasts almost 90 members, who meet at the Seal in Hillfield Road, Selsey, on the second Tuesday of every month.

THE City of Glasgow branch played host to residents and staff from the Sir Gabriel Woods Mariners Home for retired seamen.

The guests enjoyed an evening of

music, dancing and a sing-along.

The evening included a raffle and the presentation of a cheque for £200 raised by members of the RNA.

They were ferried to and from the venue by volunteers from the Glasgow Sea Cadet unit TS

Naval Quirks

U.S. BATTLESHIPS WERE

ALL NAMED AFTER

AMERICAN STATES ..



• S/M Chris Dovey (right), secretary of the Tenbury Wells branch, thanks WO2 Nobby Clark, of CTCRM, for his presentation to

Tenbury Wells delivers Forward some Christmas cheer

ROYAL Marines in Afghanistan received 'Christmas Comfort' packages again this year thanks to the efforts of the Tenbury Wells branch.

And one of the recipients of a 2006 package went along to thank members for their kindness.

In 2006 the branch sent more than 120 2kg parcels to 42 and 45 Cdos at Camp Bastion and Lashkar Gar, one of the recipients being WO2 Nobby Clark, of K Coy, 42 Cdo. Now Command Wing Sgt

Major at CTCRM Lympstone, Nobby travelled to Tenbury Wells to give a presentation on the Royals in Afghanistan.

He and his wife were also guests of honour at the branch Trafalgar Dinner, where he gave a talk on the Zeebrugge Raid.

2007's packages were put together last November and sent to 40 Cdo and 29 RMASC at Camp Bastion and a detachment of Royals with HQ 52 Infantry Brigade at Lashkar Gar.

Branch members were grateful to the people of Tenbury and further afield who donated money and goods for the parcels.

So good was the response that they went well past their target of 200, almost doubling the 2006 figure by reaching

of £1,200, which enabled us to

give the World War 2 veterans a

would not otherwise have been

able to do, and it was especially

enjoyable because they shared the

"It was a trip that many of them

great day out.

with the standards

THIS year's National Standard Bearers competition will take place at HMS Forward in Birmingham on Saturday June 14.

Those eligible for the contest, the RNR training centre at 42 Tilton Road, Birmingham, are stated in the RNA Guide to Ceremonial, available on the RNA website.

Entry forms are available in the December issue of the Circular, and must be returned by May 17.

Area 4 will be holding an open Standard Bearers competition on March 1 in the Falklands Hall at CTCRM, Lympstone.

Anyone wishing to compete or spectate should contact S/M Jim Paterson, Area 4 Ceremonial Adviser, 14 Sunnyside Road, St Judes, Plymouth PL4 9LE, telephone 01752 261646, email jim@paterson1513.fsnet.co.uk

Power and the glory

A VISIT to a power station and a trip on the Strathspey Railway were among the highlights of 2007 for the City of Inverness branch.

recruiting drive at the Inverness Highland Games, and were represented at the commissioning

S/M Bob Coburn "did the branch proud" when he paraded the RNA national standard at the RRI Festival of Remembrance in London, and in the Scottish event Gordon Ross carried the branch standard and Padric MacDonald

Among the talks at branch



and Alan Green laid a wreath. meetings were such diverse subjects as Neil Drummond's Garden, Maggie's Highland, and



Lottery grant pays for veterans' visit

MEMBERS of Purley branch enjoyed a memorable day out, thanks to a grant from the Lottery Commission's 'Awards for All' programme.

Most of the Association's members are over 60, with many

STRANGE TO THINK

THAT THE DISPUTE FOR

NAVAL SUPREMACY IN

CLOSE TO WAR WITH

AMERICA ..

in their 70s and 80s who are World War 2 veterans.

Towards the end of last year members and guests were taken by coach to Portsmouth, where they visited the Royal Naval Museum, enjoyed boat trips around the harbour and tours of

BECOME THEIR 51st

CONSEQUENCIES TO

OUR WAY OF LIFE ..

HMS Victory, HMS Warrior and the Mary Rose.
Some also went Christmas

shopping at Gunwharf Quays.
The visit also included the

Royal Naval Old Comrades Club and the Royal Maritime Club, where they reminisced about days

..WE'D HAVE HAD TO -IF NOT WE WOULD HAVE NOT TO MENTION HAVING AN AMERICAN BATTLESHIP NAMED USS "GREAT BRITAIN" MICAH

Corby head west to celebrate

WOULD WE HAVE WON?

A GOOD turn-out of Plymouth branch members ensured a warm welcome for shipmates from Corby who were in the South-West to celebrate their 20th

The venue for the main event was the Johnston Club in Devonport, which provided an "excellent" buffet, and there were celebratory tots all round.

Marguerite Cooper won the main raffle prize of a bottle of Pusser's Rum, once again donated by Rob

THE 1920s BROUGHT US STATE WITH PRAMATIC

Compere for the evening was S/M Richard Tipping, assisted by S/M Gareth Price, chairman of Corby,

future activities can be obtained from chairman S/M Bob Palmer on 01752 509931 or social secretary S/M Sue Gutteridge on 01752 849176.

Drop them an eline

NATIONAL headquarters staff are building a library of email addresses from within the

Would all branch secretaries who are able to communicate by email please forward a short message to HQ on paddy@ royalnavalassoc.com so that the

Association. who ensured an enjoyable evening for all, the only anniversary. drip being that it passed all too quickly. More information on Plymouth branch and is

● Late last vear members of Axminster branch visited the landing support ship RFA Lyme Bay in Portland. The branch has had an affiliation with the ship since she was handed over by her builders in August 2007. Pictured above are S/M David Warner, chairman of Axminster branch, presenting a plaque made of carpet of the town's coat of arms, woven by the Axminster Carpet Co Ltd

Introducing the crew of HMS Dodo – long gone but not forgotten

BARRY Prosser, who drew these cartoons, joined the Navy in 1955 as a Naval Air

He served for 15 years in various front and second-line squadrons, in carriers and ships with different aircraft and helicopters.

Barry's career took him to Borneo, Sarawak, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and Australia, before he ended up in Culdrose in 1968 running the Engine

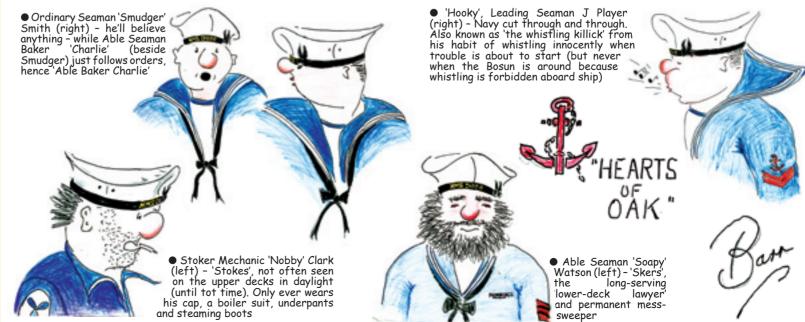
When he left the Navy in 1970 he ran a motorsport business, and then worked at Fleetlands until he retired five years ago. He now lives in Fareham.

Barry (70) has never had any formal art training, but he was often asked to scribble something with a pencil for the squadron magazine, or paint the "nose art" and crests on aircraft.

Since he retired, Barry has spent more time drawing cartoons, and particularly enjoys recreating the Navy of his youth.

"Just by chance I saw some statuettes in a Gosport shop window of Jolly Jack Tar and it triggered memories of my time in the

Navy," he said.
"So I tried to create some characters that would bring them to life and hopefully bring back similar happy memories for those who served in the Grey Funnel Line of the 50s



● Hooky says: "The buzz is they are issuing tropical kit because we're off to the Antarctic to count the penguins!' - perhaps not as stupid as it first seems, as ships often visited - and still visit - the West Indies and South America on the way south

Projects will mark Battle of **Atlantic**

memorials to those who fought in the Battle of the Atlantic are

The archivist of the HMS Vidette Crew Association, J Whittaker, said that a remembrance cross bearing the inscription Convoy ONS 5 was laid in the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey last November, a practice

which will continue.
Convoy ONS 5 was a slowmoving westbound Atlantic convoy of more than 40 ships which left Liverpool in April 1943.

The convoy and its escorts were set upon by wolf packs of U-boats, and a week-long series of ferocious attacks saw both the allies and Axis forces suffer heavy losses.

But history also sees it as the turning point in the Battle, with attacks on Allied shipping falling and U-boat losses rising.

S/M Whittaker also said there are plans to create a national memorial based on HMS Whimbrel, the last surviving ship of the period which is currently in mothballs in Egypt.

The project is led by Vice Admiral Michael Gretton (retd), the son of Peter Gretton, Convoy Escort Commander of ONS 5.

For more details see the website www.hmswhimbrel.org

S/M Whittaker is also involved in the nascent Earthwaves project to create memorials in towns and cities closely associated with the Battle in the UK, on continental

Europe and in Canada.

These will take the form of an earth wave the size of those typically experienced in the Atlantic, seeded with grasses which will give the illusion of a wave in motion when blown by

Branches urged to back Heroes charity

ASSOCIATION General Secretary S/M Paddy McClurg and National and Welfare Charities AdviserS/M Rita Lock have obtained the unanimous approval of the Nationaal Council to nominate the charity Help for Heroes as the RNA's main charity for the year.

National Council has backed this decision with a cheque for £15,000, and is now asking areas and branches to follow its lead.

"We are 'Once Navy, Always Navy', so we are helping this project because we know there are many Service people involved," said S/M Lock.

"We have nominated it as our main charity for this year, and I can only remember this happening once before, when we concentrated our efforts on the Pembroke House refurbishment.'

Tribal videos

SHIPMATE Ian Fraser, of Woking branch, has two videos which he thinks may be of some interest.

One is of the Tribal Association Service of Dedication on May 12 1991, the other is of the Force 26 Tribal Association Cenotaph Parade and River Thames reunion cruise in November 1991.

S/M Fraser said he will post them free of charge to whoever is interested – call him on 01932

start our support we have sent a cheque for £15,000.

This is now a chance to go back to the branches and take

'The project and main reason for this fund-raising is to build a swimming pool and gym at Headley Court, so our guys and girls will get their own complex.

"The price they have already paid none of us can afford - most of them are amputees.

'This is a recommendation from the National Council that Help for Heroes should be our nominated charity for the year, and we are hoping this will encourage all our branches to do something.

"One branch – Chatham – has already done something, and Area 7 has already sent a cheque."

S/M Lock said the charity's website www.helpforheroes.org. uk has a list of events organised to raise funds.

Branches can either take part in an event, or organise their own witin their premises and have it publicised on the website, as well as through normal RNA

or participation by branches and areas should be forwarded to S/M McClurg at paddy@ royalnavalassoc.com – S/M McClurg will act as a focal point for such events.

Help for Heroes was set up by Bryn and Emma Parry who were moved by the plight of Servicemen at Selly Oak Hospital.

It aims to give people a way of offering practical support to wounded personnel, by fundraising for the Service charities and other

associated projects.

Help for Heroes – page 34

Ensign is presented to cadets

THE GATWICK branch of the Submariners Association presented a wartime submarine White Ensign to TS Cossack to mark the Sea Cadet unit's 50th

anniversary.

The veteran deeps brought their branch night forward 24 hours to be able to join in the celebrations with Cossack, home for many years of the Gatwick branch.

Around 50 per cent of the membership was on parade – the passing years are taking their toll - and they had to put on a good show, as the smartly-dressed youngsters laid on a first-class display of drill.

On completion the World War 2 White Ensign, donated by branch president S/M Keith Nethercoate-Bryant, was presented to the Sea Cadet unit by branch chairman S/M Phil Prew and treasurer S/M Barry Caldicott.

Russian veterans tour Devonport

Ex-Tiffies reunited

ARCTIC veterans from Severodvinsk in Russia have visited Devonport Naval Base as part of a tour of the West Country organised by the Royal British Legion.

The four Russians all served in the World War 2 convoys, which saw up to 800 ships carry vital supplies of tanks, aircraft, ammunition and other war matériel to Russia over a four-year period.

As well as the threat from

German aircraft, ships and U-boats, the convoys and

A 50th anniversary reunion was

held in Weymouth for former

Series 32 passed out of Torpoint in 1959.

unashamed nostalgia - a time to

swing the lamps and renew old

Mike Hollingsbee, a former

friendships.

Organiser Trevor Waddington, a one-time Ordnance Artificer, said: "The reunion dinner was an evening of celebration and

Tiffies from HMS Fisgard. Some of the 28 ex-artificer apprentices were meeting colleagues for the first time since

their escorts had to cope with ferocious weather, freezing cold and mountainous seas, as well as constant daylight in the summer.

In a total of 40 return convoys, 104 merchant ships and 22 Allied warships were sunk out of 811 participants.

The veterans were joined by the British comrades for a tour of the Naval Base Heritage Area, and after lunch, hosted by Naval Base Commander Cdre Simon Lister, the group toured frigate HMS Montrose.

join the police, said: "Spending

that formative period of my life at Fisgard and Condor was the best thing I did, and it was only in later life that I came to appreciate

the sense of discipline, moral

values and comradeship that my apprenticeship had given me." The event, at the Hotel Prince

Regent, proved such a success that a 55th anniversary reunion has been mooted, giving organisers the chance to find more of the

'missing' 40 or so from the S32

See www.fisgard-s32.org for

• From left: Les Cooper, vice chairman of Mansfield RNA, welfare officer George Thompson, chairman Brian Dykes, president William McNicoll and the Mayor of Mansfield Cllr Tony Egginton

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



MYSTERY PICTURE 156

THE mystery ship in our December edition (right) was HMS Gurkha, which served as the Wilhelmus Zakarias Yohannes in the Indonesian Navy.

The £50 prize-winning entry came from Peter Clarkson, of Great Clacton in Essex.

This month's vessel pictured at speed (above) was the last of her class of three to be launched, in 1970, but has a modern-day namesake serving with the Fleet. Her identification code has been removed from the picture.

Can you name her, and the home base of the vessel which now bears her name? The right answers could win you £50.
Complete the coupon and send

it to Mystery Picture. Navy News. HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH.



Coupons giving correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish a winner.

Closing date for entries is March
11. More than one entry can be
submitted, but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our April edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

Icarus badge is back at branch

MANSFIELD branch reclaimed the badge of the ship which was adopted by the town during World War 2.

Mansfield raised £442,031 around Warship Week in March 1942 - a sum equivalent to around £15 million today, according to the branch.

The adopted warship was I-class destroyer HMS Icarus, which was launched in November 1936 and won a host of battle honours, including Bismarck 1941, Arctic 1941-43, Malta Convoys 1942 and Normandy 1944.

Wartime veterans from the ship visited Mansfield when the RNA and council used to host Icarus reunions, but the passage of time eventually put paid to these events.

The branch used to be the keepers of the ship's badge and bell when they had a headquarters in Sutton.

But when the branch was dissolved in the late 1990s the badge was handed to the council for safekeeping.

Members of the old branch resurrected it in 2005, and its membership has grown steadily from 29 at the relaunch to 45 at present – and the last Trafalgar

Dinner attracted more than 70

The branch was keen to display the Icarus badge at meetings, and the Mayor agreed to return it to the care of the branch.

HMS Icarus was involved in

the destruction of four U-boats, took part in the hunt for the Bismarck (and the search for survivors from HMS Hood), and was one of the escort ships on the heroic Operation Pedestal convoy to Malta.

The destroyer was broken up in 1946.

Memories of the Palestine Patrol

WFRF you involved in the Palestine Patrol off Haifa in 1946-

Navy News will be producing a supplement in our May edition on the 60th anniversary of the end of the operation, and would like to hear from you if you have any memories or photographs.

Please keep any accounts brief, and send them to Palestine Patrol, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH, or email edit@navynews.co.uk



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Deaths

Tat Neville A Lockwood RM. Commando Training Centre Royal Marines. Joined the RM as an officer in Sept 2007 and had completed 17 weeks of Young Officer training. He had previously served in both the RNR and RMR. December 21.

Rear-Admiral Stanley McArdle CB, LVO, GM. Rose to Flag rank from the lower deck going to sea for the first time as a boy second class. He served throughout WW2 and was commissioned as Sub/Lt in 1945. Appointed MVO when guard officer at Chatham naval barracks and later LVO for his role at

was commissioned as SuD/Lt in 1945. Appointed MVO when guard officer at Chatham naval barracks and later LVO for his role at the funeral of King George VI. Awarded the George Medal for his courage by plunging into the Irish Sea and assisting the rescue of 44 survivors from the stricken ferry Princess Victoria in 1953 while second in command of HMS Contest. Commanded Burghead Bay, Mohawk (Beira patrol) and Glamorgan in 1970. Flag Officer Portsmouth and Port Admiral 1973-75. Association of Royal Naval Officers. December 4. Aged 85.

Lt Cdr 'Fuzz' Fyson DSC. Joined the RN in 1935 and served in the training ship Frobisher then Rodney and London. At the outbreak of war he served in a RM fortress unit which mounted guns in Scapa Flow; 1940 he joined Warspite; he served in the China River gunboat Gnat in the Mediterranean Fleet's inshore squadron until she was torpedoed; then Abdiel. Specialised in navigation in 1942 and served in Shippigan, 16th Minesweeping flotilla. After volunteering for special service 1943-44, was based on Corsica and in Italy commanding the secret and elite No.2 Combined Operations Pilotage Party (COPP) where he reconnoitred the coast of Elba; later moved to Bari where he led covert operations in the Aegean and Adriatic. In 1945 he took part in Operation Roast, the assault by 2 Cdo Brigade on Lake Comacchic; awarded a DSC for his leadership, skill and resourcefulness. He retired from the RN in 1947 becoming a successful craftsman in wood. Aged 89.

Tom Shenton. WO2 RM, Sgt Major SBS. Served 1952-75. Served in Birmingham, Royal Prince, Terror and was attached to the Commando carriers: International canceist winning two Devizes to Westminster races

Commando carriers. International canoeist winning two Devizes to Westminster races and represented Britain in Germany where he won a silver medal 1963. Member of the International Canoe Federation Selection Panel and manager of the National Junior Team. SBS Association. November 23. Aged 72

David Austin. CWEM. Served 1970-93 in Mauritius, Collingwood, Dido, Sheffield Exeter, Amazon and Rooke. November 25

Edward 'Ted' K Marner. Stoker 1. Served 1949-57 in Superb ,also submarines Ambush

and Tapir. September 18. Aged 75. Les Davies. CAF(O). Joined St Georges Baracks 1947 and served for 22 years in vari-ous carriers, squadrons and air stations. FAA

Field Gun Crew 1957-58 and Cardiff Tattoo Liaison 1969, November 29. Aged 78. William 'Bill' Kerbey. PO Yeoman of Sig-nals. Served 1936-47 at Ganges, aged 16,

and in Arethusa, Maidstone, Jasmine, Geni-

and in Arethusa, Maidstone, Jasmine, Genista and Tulip. Atlantic Convoys 1941-43. December 2. Aged 88.

John Edmund 'Daisy' Adams. Fleet Chief TASI. Served 1947-79 in Vernon, Zodiac, Myngs, Lioness, Chaplet, Dundas, Osprey and Caprice; also Flag Officer Flotillas, Western Fleet and FOST. June 2007. Aged 77.

Lt Cdr Gerald Leslie Richardson. Joined Fisgard as Boy Artificer 1942 aged 15. Served in Duke of York, Implacable, Diena, Centaur, Triumph and Kent; CRRUO in Collingwood until his retirement. December 3. Aged 79.

3. Aged 79.
Bill 'Willie' Hainsworth. PO Chef Subma-Bill 'Willie' Hainsworth. PO Chef Submariner. Served amongst others in Truncheon, Thunderer, Tiptoe, Ambush, Alliance, Wilton, Vanguard and Battleaxe, also Dolphin; also in Canada 1955-57. December 7. Aged 74. Rodney Graham Sangwell. Steward. Served 1953-65 in Theseus, Albion and Brighton. December 11. Aged 72.

Graham Pope. PO Writer. Served in Chevict 1956 and a member of the association.

viot 1956 and a member of the association

June.

William Hart. POAM(E). Served FAA 1947-54. Hitchin branch FAA. December 1.

Bryn Jenkins. M(E). Served in HMS Ceylon (last commission 1958-60). After leaving the RN he later joined the Merchant Navy ending his career as a ship's bosun. December 18.

cember 18.

Albert 'Lofty' Huyton. CPO FAA. Served at Milltown, Abbots Inch, Yeovilton, RNAS Lossiermouth. Assignments with the squadron to Victorious, Ark Royal and Hermes. Also served in Aden and Tobruk. December

Ivan William 'Bill' Warne, CMEM, Served Nan William 'Bill' Warne. CMEM. Served 1952-82 in Loch Fada, Jaguar, Blackpool, Victorious, Cavalier, Triumph, Tiger, Bulwark and Nelson. Royal British Legion. December 25. Aged 73. Joseph Bell. Ch Mech(E). Ships included

Joseph Bell. Ch Mech(E). Ships included Palliser, Centaur and Loch Killisport. Chairman of RN Engineroom Association. December 21. Aged 73.

Harry Howlett. Served 1950-59. HMS Morecambe Bay Association. December. William 'Bill' Rigg. RPO. Served 1945-58 in Nigeria and last ship Eagle. HMS Ganges Association. December 30. Aged 79.

Sid Hale. 17th Destroyer Flotilla Association and HMS Opportune Association. January 8. Aged 82.

ary 8. Aged 82.

John 'Red' Swan. Aircraft Handler, also
Fleet Air Arm Field Gun Crew 1966-69 and
a member of the association. December 14.

Roger John 'Ginge' Pitt. ME1. Trained at Roger John 'Ginge' Pitt. ME1. Trained at Ganges and Raleigh and served 1958-70 in Dunkirk, Wizard, Hermes, Triumph and Cambridge. Devonport Field Gun Crew of 1966 and 1969, remaining an avid member of the association until moving from Plymouth to Swansea in 2006. January 9. Aged 64. Raymond Drake. POEI. Served 1945-55 in Ganges, Belfast, Starling, Contest, Cobham, Collingwood and Warrior. HMS Belfast Association. November 9. Aged 77.

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION

Soham & District branch November 26

Aged 73. W T 'Taffy' Williams. AB. Served in Amethyst (Yangtze Incident), Bermuda, Bigbury Bay and Newfoundland. Londonderry

Amenyst (rangze incident), bermuda, Rigbury Bay and Newfoundland. Londonderry branch. December 1. Aged 77.

Ron Halley. PO Chef. Served HMS Howe, Illustrious, Albion, Undaunted, Teazer, Yarmouth, Rothesay and Chichester. Londonderry branch. December 6. Aged 76.

Lt Cdr Walter Elliott (SCC) RNR. Served 1942-46 in Russian Convoys, also Normandy. Whitehaven and District branch. November 9. Aged 84.

Norman Reginald Upton. Telegraphist. Served in Drake, Mercury, Ulster, Illustrious, Vengeance and Kranji W/T Singapore. Birmingham branch. December 1. Aged 77.

Sid Waller. Served in Constance, Cleopatra and Victorious; after leaving RN he completed over 30 years with Port of London river police. Margate branch. November 25. Aged 76.

Eric Stone. AB. Survived sinking of

Eric Stone. AB. Survived sinking of Lightning off North African coast while on Malta convoys. Margate branch. December 2. Aged 90.

Natia Colivoys. Wargate branch. December 2. Aged 90.
Harold Alwyn. Steward. Served as national treasurer for 25 years at HQ. Joined Littlehampton branch 1978. December 15. Aged 86.
Vivian John Gray. Yeoman of Signals.

Aged 86.
Vivian John Gray. Yeoman of Signals.
Served 1939-61 in MGB 314, Amarapooka,
Flint Castle, Cardigan Bay, Adamant, Tamar,
Drake, Newfoundland, Mercury and Ganges.
Veteran of Narvik (Operation Chariot) and
Arctic Convoys. Perth, Western Australia
branch and Arctic Convoys Association.
December 9. Aged 87.
Frederick Beales. Engineer/Diver. Served
1943-50 S and T submarines Saga, Seraph,
Truant and Tantivity; also Phoebe. Beccles
branch. November 16. Aged 81.
Alfred H Pavey. AB Diver. Served 1939-50
in 12 ships including Royal Sovereign, Ajax
and Triumph. Beccles branch. December 6.
Aged 88.

Aged 88. Stanley Harman. Shipwright. Served 1943-46 in Nelson, Colombo, Mombassa and SBS. Beccles branch. December 19.

Aged 87.
Sidney 'Tex' Rainger. FAA. Soham &
District branch. December 12. Aged 81.
Danny Hallihan. Served 1953-74 in
Ganges, Cockade, Bold Pathfinder, Bold
Pioneer, Crane, Kranji W/T, Comcen
Whitehall, Norfolk, Mercury, St Brides Bay,

Writeriani, Norrolik, Mercury, St Brides Bay, Messina and Anzio as a seaman stoker, electrical, gunnery and communications. Chelmsford branch. December 13. Aged 69. Ken Hartley. Seaman. Served in Consort 1947-49 and a member of the association. Also a member of the RNA. Morphett Vale, South Australia. October 7. South Australia. October 7.

Henry Anthony Avery. Stoker Mech.
Served 1946-48 in Troubridge, St Angelo
and Pembroke. Life member and president

Uxbridge branch. William Greenhall. Served 1935-46 in Malta convoys; also heavyweight boxer for RN. St Helens branch. December 7. Aged Derek Smith. AB Gunnery. Served 1947-55 in Triumph (Korea) also Gun Carriage Crew at funeral of King George VI (1952). St Helens branch. December 21.

Gerald 'Ged' Beecroft. CPO Marine Engineer. Served 1958-94 in Vidal, Llandaff,

Engineer. Served 1958-94 in Vidal, Llandaff, Hubbertson and Beachampton. Ton Class Association. Moved to Spain 2001 – Torrevieja branch. December 4. Aged 67. Roy Manning. Served in minesweeper Fierce and submarines Talent, Ambush, Sanguine, Aleric and Teredo and served in the Merchant Navy upon leaving the RN. Wigston branch and also Leicester and Rutland branch Submariners Association.

Brian Fisher. PO Radio Electrician.
Treasurer of Atherton branch. Served in
Orwell, Maidstone, Battleaxe, Hartland
Point, Zeebrugge and Kirkliston. Ton-Class
Association, LST & Landing Craft Association
and HMS Collingwood Association. January
2. Aged 72.
Edward 'Ted' Lewis. PO. 4 Mess
Killick in Atherstone 1944-45. Veteran
North Africa, Italy, Greece, Yugoslavia
and Korea. Aldenham branch RNA, Hunt
Destroyer Association and HMS Atherstone
Association. December 28. Aged 86.
Gordon Robert Peatey, AO Leading
Supply Assistant. Served 1944-46 (hostilities
only) in Duke, Duckworth (Russian convoys),
Victory, Stockheath Camp, Havant and
Nelson (victory cruise at end of WW2). After
discharge he was appointed CEO of the Brian Fisher. PO Radio Electrician

discharge he was appointed CEO of the construction of the New Parliament House in Canberra. Canberra branch. December 25 in

Canberra. Canberra branch. December 25 in Canberra. Aged 81. Donald Cairns. Able Seaman. Wansbeck branch. Served 1943-47 in HMS Princess Elizabeth, Ganges, Lanka and Chinkara at home and Far East theatres. December.

SUBMARINERS ASSOCIATION
P 'Pat' Dillon. Telegraphist. Boy sailor St
Vincent and St George 1939-40. Submariner
1940-53 serving in H50, P37, Tigris, Tally-Ho, Fabious, Sirdar, Truncheon, Subtle,
Sanguine, Talent and Sturdy. Dolphin branch.
December Aged 86.

Sanguine, Talent and Sturdy, Dolphini Dranch. December, Aged 86.

C R H 'Charles' Clark. PO UW1. Served 1948-63 in Seascout, Thule, Thorough, Tactician, Telemachus, Finwhale, Anchorite and Ambush. Peterborough branch. Aged V 'Vivian' Constance. ERA. Served 1943-

46 in Proteus and Seascout. Birmingham branch. Aged 87. J 'Nobby' Hewitt. LM(E). Served 1950-57 in Alliance, Artful, Tiptoe and Astute. Vectis

branch. Aged 75.

J K 'Jack' Heys. LEM. Served 1950-60 in Affray, Scythian, Sanguine, Seascout, Tapir, Tabard, Taciturn and Tiptoe. Bury branch.

Aged 77. W 'Wilf' Oldham. ERA1. Served 1942-62 in Varangian, Virulent, Tactician, Turpin, Sirdar, Sleuth, Talent, Solent, Totem, Artful and Ambush, Gosport branch, Aged 89 J R B 'John' Storm. L/Tel. Served 1941-

46 in Upright and Tiptoe. Plymouth branch. Aged 87.

J A 'John' Willson. RO2. Served 1957-66 in Acheron, Auriga, Odin, Totem and Tiptoe. Gosport branch. Aged 71.

ASSOCIATION OF BN OFFICERS Second Officer P Micklewood WRNS Cdr F J Thornton. Served Heron, Fulman Bytown, Belfast and Seahawk

ALGERINES ASSOCIATION

ALGERINES ASSOCIATION
Pat Fitz. L/Sea. Served Albacore.
November 6. Aged 85.
Thomas Brice. Sto/Mec. Served
Myrmidon. November 14. Aged 81.
Edwin MacCrossen. Sto/Mec. Served
Cockatrice and Truelove. November 16.
Aged 79.

Aged 79.

George Duncan. O/Sig. Served Laertes.
December 4. Aged 70.

Henry Paine. L/Wmn. Served Plucky.
December 5. Aged 93.

Norman Chapman. SBA. Served Acute. December 14. Aged 84.

Alan Budden. AB. Served Rattlesnake.

December 25. Aged 73.

Peter Mooney. Sto/Mec. Served Wave.
January 3. Aged 79.

LST & LANDING CRAFT ASSOCIATION
E B D Holderness. Served LCT 568.

November 5.

K J A Homden. Served LCT 2420.

November 26.

D Harper. Served LCT 591 and LCT(S)9.

K G Preston, Served LST 303 and HMS

K G Preston. Served LST 303 and HMS Illustrious. December 5. Arthur Kitchen. Served LST 406, LSI(L) Glenroy and HMS Montclare. December 19. Brian Fisher. Served LST 3532 and HMS Zeebrugge. January 2.

Ask Jack

Palestine Patrol: Were you involved in the Palestine Patrol off Haifa in 1946-48? Navy News will be producing a supplement in our May edition on the 60th anniversary of the end of the operation, and would like to hear from you if you have any memories or photographs (which will be scanned and returned). Please keep any accounts brief and send them to: Palestine Patrol, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth, PO1 3HH or email edit@navynews.co.uk.
HMS Barfleur: Around July 22, 1953, Michael Geldart was the co-pilot of an RAF Hastings aircraft which ditched into the Mediterranean. Initially they were rescued by a US seaplane, but because of the extra heavy load could not take off. HMS Barfleur.

heavy load could not take off. HMS Barfleur was dispatched from Malta and picked them up nine hours later. Are there any crew members that remember that incident? If so his brother would like to hear from you.

so his brother would like to hear from you. Contact Anthony Geldart, 2 Bristol Row, Bere Ferrers, Yelverton, Devon, Pl20 7JG. HMS Dreadnought: Derek recalls being in the Royal Guard for the launch of the nuclear submarine HMS Dreadnought at Chatham Dockyard July 1959. He cannot recall the actual Royal designate who inspected the guard and is wondering whether anyone has a photo he could borrow of this occasion? Contact Derek Hicks at derek@hicks9319. Isnet.co.uk or write to 2a London Road, Chipping Norton, Oxon, OX7 5 AX. HMS Loch Killisport: Looking for the commission book for the frigate Loch Killisport for 1954-55 which operated in the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean, the crew were

Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean, the crew were refisal dull airlight of the standard from the frigate Whitesand Bay at Chatham in January 1955 after problems with the water distilling plant/evaporators. Will pay for postage and for return of same to the owner. Contact Dave Whitfield at Allonby1957@aol.com, tel: 01697 332908

or write to 88 The Crofts, Silloth on Solway, Cumbria, CA7 4HA.

HMS Raleigh: Marie King is seeking information and hopefully a photograph of her father Charel Eugene Terelinck who served between 1946-54 on several ships including Raleigh, Nelson, Pembroke, Dido, Superb, Dolphin and Maidstone. Anyone who knew of him and would like to share their memories, please contact Marie on 023 9266 8952 or write to 108 Balfour Road, North End, Portsmouth PO2 0NH.

RN Motoring Association: Maurice served in the RN Medical branch 1960-82 and was a founder member of the RN Motoring Association: This he transferred from car to car for many years. However in a recent house move it has got lost; he would like to replace it and would like to know if the association still exists (so would the Navy News), or someone has a badge they would like to dispose of? Contact Maurice Allen, 61 Woodlands Crescent, Poundbury, Dorchester, DT1 3RQ or tel: 01305 251715.

HMS Shoreham: Bill Lofts is seeking a ticket from the launch of HMS Shoreham

or ter. 01305 251/15. HMS Shoreham: Bill Lofts is seeking a ticket from the launch of HMS Shoreham on April 9 2001 at Vospers Woolston Yard. Contact him on 01273 844741.

Navy News on tape

Navy News is available free of charge on tape from Portsmouth Area Talking News for those with difficulty reading normal type. Contact 023 9269 0851 and leave a message with a contact number. No special equipment is needed to play the standard 90-minute cassettes.



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Reporting from the Fleet

Honours

New Year's Honours for Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel

The Most Honourable Order of the Bath

As Knight Commander:

Vice Admiral Adrian James Johns As Companions: Rear Admiral M Kimmons, Rear Admiral D'H Mathews

The Most Excellent Order of the British Empire
As Commanders: Cdre C J Stait, Cdre L Van Beek, Cdre B N B Williams

As Officers: Cdr R M H Dane, Cdr A P Orchard,

Capt R M Pegg, Cdr B F Peilow, Lt Col M E Porter RM, Capt J D Stratton, Cdr N J Thompson As Members: CPOAET(AV) D A Belcher, WO2ET(ME) A Cray, Lt Cdr P C L Durham, WO1(CS) N Hall RM, Maj C C Harris RM, WO1ET(ME) M C Lock, WO1ET(ME) G A Miles, Lt Cdr N J Moulton RNR SCC, WO1PT B Richardson, WO2 R J Robson RM, Surg Cdr R A Ross, WO1 A P Steel QGM RM, Maj N Sutherland RM, Cdr E L Tritschler, Lt Cdr A D Wrav D Wray
Queen's Volunteer Reserves Medal

Cdr S J Eagles RNR

Reunions

MARCH 2008

MARCH 2008

HMS Duchess Association: Reunion, March 7-9, at Mill Rythe, Hayling Island. All commissions welcome. For details contact Adrian 'Sharkey' Ward at adie.warde ntworld.com, tel: 01522 872998 or write to 17 Marne Gardens, Lincoln, LN1 3UQ.

HMS Diana: Reunion to be held at the Parkhouse Hotel, North Promenade, Blackpool, March 7-9. We have a wonderful friendly membership which is made up from members of all commissions. Come along and meet some old oppos. If not join us, and come along to the Sept 2008 reunion in Birmingham. Contact John Fisher at johnjackie. fisher@virgin.net or tel: 01530 242850.

RN Communications Association: AGM in Guernsey on March 7-8. For more information contact the Chairman, Sam McFarlane, on 01634 684817.

The Second Submarine Squadon (The

mauon contact the Chairman, Sam McFarlane, on 01634 684817.

The Second Submarine Squadron (The Sunshine Squadron): Reunion for 2008 will take place at the Weston Mill, Oak Villa Sports and Social Club, Camels Head, Plymouth, on March 8 commencing at 1200 until later. For further details contact: Alan Jones at stokerjonescOB@blueyonder.co.uk, tel: 01752 201583 or Nick Addison on 01579 346320 or write to Alan Jones, 101 York Road, Weston Mill, Plymouth, PL5 1AU.

HMS Cassandra: Reunion at the Kistor Hotel, Torquay, on March 14-17. Enquiries to Cliff Longfoot, 50 Graylands Road, Walton, Liverpool L4 9UQ. 0151 226 3675 or ongfoo50@hotmail.com.

APRIL 2008

APRIL 2008
HMS Cumberland Association: The reunion will be held on April 24-28 at the Royal Clifton Hotel, Southport. For further details contact the chairman Sam Watson at swba11003@blueyonder.co.uk or tel: 01634

235861.

HMS Ladybird (Sasebo, Japan) Association: The 2008 annual reunion is at the Prince of Wales Hotel, Beweley, Gloucestershire, April 25-28. Crew of HMS Tyne who were with the ship in Sasebo for the 'change over' are welcome. Details from Terry Cooper, 28 Hopgrove Lane South, Malton Road, York, VO32 9TG. Tel/fax: 01904 425883.

YO32 9TG. Tel/fax: 01904 425883.

HMS Collingwood Association: Change of venue for our tenth anniversary reunion – now at the Red Lea Hotel, Scarborough, April 11-14. All members and partners welcome. Programme as before. Visit our website at www.hmscollingwoodassociation.co.uk or contact our secretary, Bill Gee at 123 Roman Road, Jarrow, Tyne & Wear, NE32 4SJ Fourth Destroyer Association: (HMS Agincourt, Aisne, Alamein, Barrosa, Corunna, Dunkirk, Jutland and Matapaan) Reunion at the Southcliff Hotel, The Leas, Folkestone, April 11-14 and includes Shep

Woolley in concert. Contact Terry Parker at D97Corunna@aol.com, tel: 01303 249242 or write to 54c Cheriton Road, Folkestone, Kent CT20 1DD.

The to 34c christon Hold, richestorie, rein CT20 1DD.

HMS Ariel: Were you an Artificer Apprentice at HMS Ariel, Worthydown, in 1958, in Series 20/21/22, or other? A reunion has been arranged for April 18-20 to mark the 50th anniversary of the passing out class, mainly Series 21, and those who knew them. If you are interested in joining us please contact Harry Taylor at harrytaylor@tesco.net, tel: 01305 852082 or write to H Taylor, 4 Woodsford Road, Crossways, Dorchester, Dorset, DT2 8UU.

HMS Decov Association: The next

4 woodstord Road, Crossways, Dorchester, Dorset, DT2 8UU.

HMS Decoy Association: The next reunion will be held at the Belgrave Hotel, Queens Promenade, Bispham, Blackpool, April 18-20. Open to all Decoy shipmates. For further details contact: Alf Singleton at alfred.singleton@ntlworld.com, tel: 01329 510941 or write to 42 Uplands Crescent, Fareham, Hants, PO16 7U.

HMS Middleton (L/74) Association: 24th (Informal) reunion at the RNA Club, Leamington Spa, on April 25-26. A special welcome to newcomers so far untraced. Details from Mike Alston, 6 Belmont Park Road, Maidenhead, SL6 6HT or tel: 01628 629655.

Oman: Did you serve in Oman? A reunion of military and civilian personnel who served in the Sultanate of Oman between 1975 and 2007 is taking place in Hull, East Yorkshire on May 12. For details contact Jim Dyson at jimandjan@jimandjan.karoo.co.uk, tel: 01482 846599 or write to 41 Lawnsgarth, Cottingham, East Yorks, HU16 5RQ.

HMS Opossum Association: 15th reunion at the Lindum Hotel, Lytham St Annes, Lancashire, May 16-19. All Opposums welcome. More information from Eddie Summerfold, 28 Greymont Road, Limefield, Bury, Lancs, BL9 6PN or tel: 0161 764 8778.

HMS Coventry: Reunion at the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth, May 23-25. It will also be the first meeting of the Coventry 82 Association. All ex-shipmates welcome. Contact Brian Savage at brian savage69@ hotmail.com, tel: 01623 479877 or write to 7 Lammas Close, Sutton in Ashfield, Nottinghamshire, NG17 1AX.

JUNE 2008

JUNE 2008
HMS Glorious, Ardent and Acasta (Glarac): A memorial service to commemorate the 68th anniversary of the sinking of the ships will take place on June 8 at St Nicholas Church, HMS Drake, Devonport. All former crew, aircrew, survivors, relatives and friends are warmly invited to attend. Details from Vincent Marcroft at vinny847022@

hotmail.com, tel: 0161 654 7638 or write to 15 Hillside Drive, Middleton, Manchester M24 2LS.

AUGUST 2008

HMS Blackpool: A reunion will be held at the Stretton Hotel, Blackpool, on the week-end of August 29. All ex-crew members are welcome to attend. For booking information, costs and schedule of events, contact; Bob Jones at carol.bob77@ntlworld.com or tel: 023 9236 3752.

SEPTEMBER 2008

SEPTEMBER 2008
HMS Invincible Communications Association (Falklands 82): Second reunion will be held on September 27 in Portsmouth. Contact Tim Jenkins at Tjenkins@hwfire. org.uk, Mick Kessell at mickkessell@tiscali.co.uk, website: http://www.freewebs.com/hica82 or tel: 01905 357753.

co.uk, website: http://www.freewebs.com/hica82 or tel: 01905 357753.

OCTOBER 2008

HMS Eskimo 1966-68: Were you part of one of the best ship's companies in the Fleet? The 2008 reunion for the 1966-68 commission HMS Eskimo will take place at the Shanklin Hotel, Isle of Wight, October 3-6. Join us for a fun and frolics weekend with all the trimmings. Full details from 'Lucy' Locket at Lockcontrol@aol.com, tel: 01404 823143 or Rab Butler at beantin57@btinternet.com, tel: 01622 817071.

HMS Morecambe Bay are holding their annual reunion at Broadway Park Hotel, Isle of Wight, October 10-12. All Bay-class frigates are welcome. Contact D Turk at doug, turk@nthworld.com or tel: 01252 377481.

HMS Trafalgar Association: Reunion in Portsmouth, October 17-19. If you are interested in attending or joining contact Taff pugh at mwpugh@tesco.net or tel: 01978 262956 or 07971 812820.

HMS Troubridge (last commission): Reunion at the Royal Hotel, Crewe, October 24-5. Contact Bryan Pace at Romft1@yahoo.com or write to 665 West Marr Road, Howell, Ml, 48855, USA.

HMS Ulster 1958-60 commission: The 50th and final reunion will take place on October 24-27, at the Kistor Hotel in Torquay,

50th and final reunion will take place on October 24-27, at the Kistor Hotel in Torquay, Devon. Details of cost and the weekend package can be obtained from Reg Ralph at reginald.ralph@btinternet.com, tel: 01323 725978 or write to 20 Penhale Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN22 7JX. Details also on website at www.candoo.com/ncot/

JANUARY 2009

BRNC Jan 1959: Were you a Cadet in this term? Interested in a 50th anniversary reunion in 2009? Contact Keith Simmons at simmons.kmc@virgin.net or tel: 01305

THE TIME OF **YOUR LIVES**

NAVY NEWS looks back through its pages to recall some of the February headlines of past decades...



Harrier trials with HMS Blake in 1969

40 years ago

THE Harrier, the world's first operational VTOL fighter aircraft, was shown off to an admiring audience in Surrey. In October the year before the Hawker Siddeley aircraft had been brought in to land on the small helicopter platform of the Italian Navy escort cruiser Andrea Doria. A year later the Harrier would be seen successfully landing on the restricted flight-deck of the Royal Navy Tiger-class cruiser HMS Blake.

30 years ago

ARK Royal on wheels... A locomotive at Plymouth was named Ark Royal in honour of the Navy's aircraft carrier. The ten-year-old Plymouth-based train, no.035 of the type 50 class, proudly bore two gunmetal plaques with the ship's badge, presented by the commanding officer Capt Ted Anson. The train, which operated between London's Paddington station and the south-west, was the first of the class to be named after a warship.

20 years ago

CPOMA Clive Martin rushed to the aid of a builder injured 95ft above the ground in Lee-on-the-Solent. The injured man had been testing the tension of cables on a newly-erected crane at the site when a cable snapped, fracturing a bone in his thigh and the site when a cable snapped, fracturing a bone in his thigh and gashing his leg. The ambulance crew were debating how best to meet him. CPO Martin said: "My first thought was to get help to the injured man, so going up – climbing the central ladder and then crawling along the boom – wasn't too bad. Coming back down was the worst part, because by then I had time to think about what I was doing." The injured man was airlifted to safety by the Search and Rescue helicopter from HMS Daedalus.

Arboretum growth sees costs burgeon

THE NATIONAL Memorial Arboretum has renewed its appeal for legacies as its increasing popularity causes costs to rise.

The arboretum, near Lichfield in Staffordshire, is home to dozens of military and civilian memorials and commomorative trees across 150 acres of reclaimed gravel workings.

The high-profile dedication of the national Armed Forces Memorial in October, attended by the Queen and high-ranking politicians, helped attract increasing numbers of visitors the figure doubled to 120,000

in 12 months.

The hike in visitor numbers means costs in areas such as maintenance, groundkeeping, cleaning and security have also risen sharply.

Arboretum chief executive and former Royal Navy officer Charlie Bagot Jewitt said: "The cost of running the Arboretum has increased as the number of visitors has gone up.

"The list of things we now need finance for is almost endless, and while legacies have always played an important role, we would be extremely grateful for further support.

"The arboretum has gained a much-greater profile across the UK and we are welcoming new people every day.
"We do not charge for entry,

so the challenge is to generate sufficient funds to cope with the demands that are being made

"Legacies are a valuable way of generating additional revenue and they will help the Arboretum reach the next stage in its development."

Charlie is happy to discuss the matter with anyone who is considering leaving a legacy to the Arboretum, and can be contacted on 01283 792333, or by email at cbagot@thenma.

Where are you now?

Buccaneer Squadrons: Mac Dray is looking for his best friend Brendan Pratt, from his Navy days 1965-77. Brendan was a NAM a/e on Buccaneer Squadrons then transferred to the Phot Branch. Left the Service in the early eighties and worked in pubs in London. Contact Mac at silverwaters@phillipisland.net.au or write to PO Box 621, Cowes, Phillip Island, 3922, Australia.
HMS Dauntless: Seeking former contacts of Frank Sutton Taylor who served in HMS Dauntless 1942-43, HMS Scarab 1943-44 and HMS Birmingham 1944-45. Contact Russell Taylor at Russell/Taylor@xtra.co.nz or write to PO Box 469, Kurneu, Auckland, 0841, New Zealand.

or write to PO Box 469, Kurneu, Auckland, 0841, New Zealand.
HMS Fife: Looking for Andy 'Topsy' Turner who was an RP with Andy 'Jumper' Cross on the last trip – decommissioning tour in the mid-eighties. Contact Andy at andy. cross2@ntlworld.com, tel: 01733 572845 or write to 4 Lewes Gardens, Werrington, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, PE4 6QN.
HMS Ganges 1957-59, Collingwood 43 Mess 352/361: Seeking Jervis Markham, J Adams, Jeff Butler, David Frater, Williams, Spud Murphy and more. Please contact J W Curtis on 01780 754/291 or write to 42 Doughty Street, Stamford, Lincs, PE9 1UT. Goldcrest/Russell: Tony Hammond

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would like to hear from anyone who served with him on these ships during 1960-63. Contact Tony at shirleyandtony@tiscali. co.uk, tel: 0121 360 7756 or write to 4 Sutherland Close, Great Barr, Birmingham, P43 717.

HMS Hedingham Castle: Mr Davies HMS Hedingham Castle: Mr Davies was a boy seaman on Hedingham Castle in 1950. He is seeking an old shipmate Ronnie Gartside, who was mess Killick at Portland. Ronnie also drew great caricatures. Contact Mr D Davies, 57 Syme Place, Rosyth, Fife, KY11 2SQ or tel: 01383 418431.

HMS Pickles: Looking to find anyone who served with Howard White in WW2 on HMS Pickles (minesweeper) 1943-45. Howard is 85 now, and still fit and well. His son-in-law is doing this on his behalf as his memory is not so good, but he still talks of

memory is not so good, but he still talks of the boiler refit in South Africa and the time he went to Burma to deliver Sir Clive Brook. If you remember Howard, contact Peter Cookson at ptcookson@talktalk.net, tel:

Cookson at ptcookson@talktalk.net, tel:
01159 626401 or write to 34a Digby Avenue,
Mapperley, Nottingham, NG3 6DU.
HMS Royal Arthur: Sid Neale would like
to hear from anyone who knew him. He joined
Royal Arthur, 16 Hut, 519 Class, Maintop
(MT) Division, Corsham, Wilts in May 1948
and then went on to HMS Raleigh, 13 Mess,

Anson Division, Unicorn Block, Torpoint, Devon. It was there that he and Pete Gorman painted a 'caricature' of the duty officer inside the mess door and wonders if it is still there. He is looking for a copy of the group photographs that were taken at the time. If you can help, contact Sid Neale, 80 West End Road, Bitterne, Southampton, Hants, SO18 6T.I.

SO18 6TJ.

HMS Salisbury: Seeking to contact any ex-personnel of HMS Salisbury, from 1974-77, in particular members of the forward seaman's mess, and AB Glenn Cawthra. Please contact ex AB Taff Charles at adrian_cadg@hotmail.com.

seaman's mess, and AB Glenn Cawfnra. Please contact ex AB Taff Charles at adriancadg@hotmail.com.

Venerable, Enard Bay, Mermaid: Trying to locate anyone who served on the following ships: HMS Venerable 1944-45, HMS Enard Bay 1945-46, HMS Mermaid 1946-48. AB Radar Plotter V Smith is waiting to hear from you. Contact him at Glaxo971@aol.com, tel: 029 2056 6283 or write to 9 Douglas Close, Danescourt, Cardiff, CF5 2QT.

HMS Liverpool, WIGS, 1996-97: Andy 'Bungy' Williams is seeking Colin 'Mitch' Mitchell from Aire in Scotland, last known to be L(OM) about eight years ago, possibly promoted or left service. Also Anthony 'Jaffa' Jeffries, last known to be LS(R) about 10 years ago, and Jason 'Reg' Varley, last known as OM(UW), comes from Burnley. Lads, if you see this or anyone who knows of them sees this, please contact me on 07919 181977, 01527 451 520 or email them sees this, please contact me on 07919 181977, 01527 451 520 or email

andybungywilliams@yahoo.co.uk.
P 'Pat' Dillon: After his father Pat's death, Michael Dillon would like to hear from anyone who knew him during his Service career in the Royal Navy. Contact: Michael Dillon, 108 Coronation Road, Sheerness, Kent. ME12 2QR.

Swap drafts

AB1(SEA) Cole. Current draft: HMS Portland. Would like to swap for: any Portsmouth-based ship. Contact: 361-ABSEA10@a.dli.mod.uk. AB(CIS)1 Diggle. Current draft: HMS Exeter. Would like to swap for: any UK shoreside draft. Contact: 278-OMC3@a.dli. mod.uk.

AB1Logs(Pers) Marsh. Draft: HMS Ark Royal, February 25. Would like to swap for: HMS Illustrious or any Portsmouth-based ship. Contact: 9380 22953, 0785 472 0303.

Sports lottery

December 8: New car - POAET(R) B P Moffat, RAF Cottesmore; £1,500 -ETWE(SM) C D Burke, Vengeance (P); £500 - OM(W)1 K F Waddell, Kent. December 15: £5,000 - LRO S Hall, Mer-sey; £1,500 - CPOWEA R D Briggs, Abbey-wood; £500 - WTR E Meakin, MOD COMDT London

December 21: £5,000 - Mne C A G Russell, 40 Cdo RM; £1,500 - ALNN J Andrews, Nelson UPO; £500 - Capt R D Brading RM, 40 Cdo RM.

40 Cdo RM.

December 28: £5,000 - LOM N S Morrison, Illustrious; £1,500 - AET S R Thomas, 771 NAS Culdrose; £500 - POMA G T Lumsden, MWS DDS, Horsea.

January 5: £5,000 - Lt T G E Williams, Collingwood; £1,500 - Mne L Cooper, Bul-

wark; £500 - Capt J M Newell, MPH IPT Abbeywood

Abbeywood.
January 12: £5,000 - CIS M J Bathgate,
Portland; £1,500 - OM A S Cahill, Bulwark;
£500 - WO2 C Clark, Neptune.

Contact sheet

Ministry of Defence: 0870 607 4455,

www.royalnavy.mod.uk
Veterans Agency: 0800 169 2277, www.
veteransagency.mod.uk
Medals enquiries: 0800 085 3600
RN and RM Service records: 023 9262

Agency), www.falklands25.com Royal Naval Association: 020 7352 6764,

noyaı naval association: 020 7352 6764, www.royal-naval-association.co.uk RNBT: 023 9269 0112 (general), 023 9266 0296 (grants), www.rnbt.org.uk British Legion: 08457 725725, www. britishlegion.org.uk

74, www.nff.org.uk SSAFA Forces Help: 0845 1300 975,

vw.ssafa.org.uk Royal Naval Museum: 023 9272 7562,

ww.fleetairarm.com Royal Marines Museum: 023 9281 9385, vw.royalmmarinesmuseum.co.uk RN Submarine Museum: 023 9252 9217,

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Please send me details and membership application form:



to: Membership Secretary, ARNO, 70 Porchester Terrace, LONDON W2 3TP

Entries for the Deaths' column and Swap Drafts in March's Noticeboard must be received by February 11

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3HH or email: edit@navynews.co.uk. If you are sending your notice in via

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Falklands 25: 0800 169 2277 (Veterans

RN Community: www.rncom.mod.uk Naval Families Federation: 023 9265 4374

ww.royalnavalmuseum.org
Fleet Air Arm Museum: 01935 840565.

National Maritime Museum: 020 8312 6565, www.nmm.ac.uk Imperial War Museum: 020 7416 5320,

PEOPLE

Handbags at dawn for riders

IN A refreshing change, cyclists from RNAS Culdrose have crossed the nation from coast to coast, mountain-biking from the west coast of Cumbria to Yorkshire's North Sea coastline.

POPT Neil Howe said: "The night before we started out from St Bees the barman quizzed us 'Are you doing the handbag route

"Seeing our bemused expressions, he explained that the route we had chosen would result in periods of putting the bikes on our shoulders and carrying them over the passes.

"It was a phrase we would be very familiar with over the next

The sailors and airmen set themselves a tough challenge, crossing the 200 miles of hilly terrain from the Lake District, Yorkshire Dales and North Yorkshire Moors in just four days with no support driver, so carrying all their own supplies on

the bikes.
"If we didn't have it with us, we had to do without," said Neil. "Unable to carry tents, we were accommodated in Youth Hostels where at least we had the luxury of a hot shower to relieve our aching muscles.

Aircraft Technician Sandy Gibson said: "I won't miss the up hills, they were severe, but the down-hill sections will live long in the memory. My brakes took a

AET Dan Harris added: "It was amazing, easily the hardest thing I have ever done but rewarding too.

"Not many people can say they have cycled the width of the



och look

GRANGEMOUTH artist Lesley Anne Derks had a special commission to create a distinctive work of art for retiring Naval Base

Commander, Cdre Carolyn Stait.

Although mental pictures of Faslane Naval Base do not easily conjure up the twinkle of lights and the soft outline of rising hills, Lesley Anne's painting, entitled *Clyde at Night*, brings to life a peaceful scene of the Gareloch and its Naval base.

The one-off commission has proven so popular that Lesley Anne has allowed the picture to be reproduced as a limited

She said: "I was really pleased that people liked it, especially the commodore. I met her and thought she was down to earth "I don't normally do commissions, as I prefer to work from my

own imagination, and have never met the Navy before.

"However I was treated so well and was fascinated by what I

saw that I would definitely consider doing something else."
Find out more by contacting Peter Adams on 01383 425549
or email peter.adams@a.dii.mod.uk.



Thunderer thunders westward

THIRTY Royal Naval undergraduate engineers headed out to the famous US Naval Academy at Annapolis.

The future marine, weapon or air engineer officers came from the universities of Newcastle, Loughborough, Aston and Loughborough, Aston and Southampton – the home of the lead and founder RN unit Thunderer Squadron.

Over the course of their four weeks Stateside, the trainee engineers worked alongside their US

midshipmen counterparts on a summer training exercise.

Mid Peter Vincent explained:
"LANTPAT-Atlantic Professional Afloat Training for Midshipmen – is a maritime-based seamanship, particularly and his familiarity in the familiarity in the control of the counterpart of the count navigation and ship familiarisation exercise designed to test the US Mids on the practical elements of

"It provides individuals with valuable seagoing experience before entering the fleet 'proper'."

The British midshipmen had all been carefully prepared back in Blighty with instruction in navigation, and the important distinctions between US and UK

The US Naval Academy has a fleet of Yard Patrol boats, 108ft long, flat-bottomed with a wooden hull and metal superstructure, which would become the undergraduate engineers' home.

Peter said: "We set off bright and early on a weekday morning, a total of six YPs headed north with a further six heading south.

"All midshipmen, including ourselves, were divided into watches – the first taste of watchkeeping we had ever experienced.

"Over the next two weeks or so we spent at sea we all gained practical instruction and experience on all aspects of bridgekeeping, with the most interesting of all – some would argue most important - engine watch.

"This involved extended peri-ods in the engine room conduct-ing machinery rounds and observations, utilising the time-old tradition of taking manual watchkeeping records.

The British sailors enjoyed a two-day visit to the small fishing village of Greenport on Long Island, before steaming north to there, after a few nights ashore, the boats headed on to their final destination Boston.

Glimpse

inside RN

TRI-SERVICE and civilian staff based at RAF Innsworth headed down from Gloucester to look inside the dark blue world of

The whistlestop tour was conceived to give 22 (Training)

Group a better understanding of the RN.

the first stop, although the visitors commented on the ship's Tardis-like nature – baffled by how the

boat deck managed to fit inside

the warship.
'Train hard, fight easy' was the

motto for a brief on the teaching methods of Flag Officer Sea

The visit concluded with a tour of retired submarine HMS

Courageous, a real eye-opener to the vast majority of the group

who had never before set foot in a

'boat', and couldn't help but won-

Training.

Assault ship HMS Bulwark was

Devonport Naval Base.

"As you can imagine," said Peter, "all on board were devastated to get alongside a day early and watch a Red Sox baseball game.

"Whilst in Boston we visited USS Constitution, and other local tourist attractions. "The exercise finished in

Boston after three days leave, but not before we all undertook the Officer of the Deck qualification.

"All UK mids were fortunate enough to pass the qualification with flying colours!"

He concluded: "It was a rare

experience to gain this sort of maritime experience prior to joining Britannia Royal Naval College, whilst also gaining a valuable insight in to the workings of an allied Navy - particularly one with which we work so closely.'

Thirty Midshipmen on the Defence Technical Undergraduate Scheme visited America to find out about life in the US







in brief

Royal Marines came into action when quadriplegic sailor Hilary Lister asked about her chances

of abseiling.
The RM Commando Display
Team were carrying out several 90ft abseils each day at the Earls Court Boat Show, and the world-record holder asked if she had any chance of

abseiling.

Never ones to refuse a challenge, the Marines set out

to make it happen. Sgt Christopher 'Taff' Hunter set up the rigging at the front of the Earls Court building, while Cpl Karl Gilson bore Hilary

strapped to his frame.
Taff said: "We were just chatting to other exhibitors and talking about what we were doing at the show when Hilary said that she would love to do something like that.

"It wasn't particularly difficult to organise and we were just glad that we could help her achieve something that she wanted to do.

"She is a fantastic person and it was a pleasure to help

Hilary, who is only able to move her head, first achieved a world record in August 2005 when she sailed solo across the English Channel with a specially-adapted boat using 'sip and puff' equipment.

■ FOR the third time in succession, the holder of a chief petty officer post in the Maritime Data Centre in Gibraltar has won one of the scarce promotions to

the rank of warrant officer.

CPO David 'Lennie' Faircliff is one of only two promotions in 2007 in the Under Water branch, but Gibraltar must be a good place for promotions - his two predecessors received the same accolade.

The unit's commanding officer Lt Cdr Nick Chapman said: "By the time a chief petty officer is selected for this demanding appointment, he is already an experienced specialist at the top

of his branch.
"The three CPOs who have worked with me at the Maritime Data Centre have all been highquality individuals and this has been recognised in the fact that all three have been selected for warrant officer."
Lennie will be found, wearing

his new rank slides, in the Fleet centre at Northwood.

■ Trainee sailor AB Lisa Crittenden was awarded a prize at her old school's annual prizegiving ceremony for her hard work to join the Navy. Lisa, now at HMS Raleigh,

picked up the award for the

picked up the award for the best vocational student and the Roborough award for endeavour from John Kitto Community College.
At John Kitto, Lisa studied for a BTEC First Diploma in Public Services. She said: "At the beginning of the course I was very unfit and over-weight. "I've wanted to join the Navy

"I've wanted to join the Navy since I was 13 years old, and I was determined to achieve my ambition

"I lost five stone in 12 months, by taking lots of exercise and eating the right

■ THE TRIBULATIONS of life inside the Navy have led former LPT Steven Harris to set up in business outside as a way of making things smoother.

Steven, who served in frigates Richmond, Grafton and Iron Duke, and his wife Tracy have created My Virtual Concierge, offering deployed personnel in the Portsmouth area a one-stop shop to make their lives easier.

They offer to solve the problems back home for the people away, whether deliveries, tradesmen or other necessities.

Find out more on www. myvirtualconcierge.co.uk or call 07799 651653.



Naval wife signs up for Naval life

AFTER 14 years signed up as a Naval wife, mum Sally Stinchcombe has signed for the Naval service as a member of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

Sally has just completed a 13-week stewards' course at the Defence Maritime Logistics School at HMS Raleigh and is now deployed on Fleet support

tanker RFA Orangeleaf.
Sally's husband Paul is a chief petty officer serving at Raleigh's Recruit School where he helps

turn civvies into sailors.
Sally said: "My children left home last year, so I decided I would like a career of my own.

"The RFA offers excellent opportunities to all ages and I would like to see more of the

"The last 13 weeks have been fantastic. I now feel really well prepared and ready to join my

She added: "The course is very thorough and has provided me with a vast amount of underpinning knowledge.



 CPO Paul Stinchcombe RN and wife Sally, a newly-qualified steward in the RFA

husband has been "Mv hugely supportive and due to his experience with the RN trainees he has been able to offer good advice on many occasions.

Husband Paul said: "I'm very proud of Sally.

"This is a big step for anybody and she has done well in her

"Hopefully she is going to enjoy her time and travel the world, just as I have done in the Royal



 Anchor the Bear, Capt Bob Tarrant and Surg Lt Cdr Matthew Turner with children from Manor Field Infant School and (right) Mne Nicky Macfarlane abseils

with Anchor from the bridge roof
Pictures: LA(Phot) Kelly Whybrow

BEFORE heading off on her long journey south, iceship HMS Endurance sent her smallest crew member to say goodbye to his old friends.

Anchor the teddy-bear arrived at Manor Field Infants school in Basingstoke with the ship's commanding officer Capt Bob Tarrant on one of the Red Plum's two Lynx helicopters.

Anchor, clad in flying overalls and helmet, was welcomed by 160 children at the school, who said their goodbyes to their small bear mascot who will not return to British shores until 2009.

Anchor is the longest-serving sailor on board Endurance and has been to more far-flung areas of the world than many of his shipmates.

Anchor and his friends on board the iceship keep regular contact with the children at the school and elsewhere through the ship's educational website www. visitandlearn.co.uk.





Cpl Kev Rose, Page 3 Girl Danni and Capt Sean Lerwill

Glamour puss with **Booties**

THE ROYAL Marines' assault course at CTCRM Lympstone proved surprisingly popular this winter, although it may have just been the participant that caught

The Sun's Page 3 Girl and official Royal Marines pin-up Danni donned boots and fatigues to tackle the infamous obstacle course in the slightly-less infamous Devon rain.

For some reason, Danni's blonde determination on the course seems to have eclipsed that of her rival, Tom Newton-Dunn, The Sun's defence correspondent.

Physical Training Instructors Capt Sean Lerwill RM and Cpl Kev Rose kept a close eye on their charges, making sure that all obstacles were tackled correctly.

At the last of the 12 obstacles the pair were neck and neck, but Danni was the eventual winner while Tom sank to his knees in

Danni said: "It's only when you try something like this that you understand how tough these guys really are."

WO Dave Fradley RM said:
"Danni battled over the infamous assault course showing true Commando spirit to beat Tom

Newton-Dunn.
"We hope that Danni's visit helped to boost the morale of all Royal Marines serving operationally."

Divers drum up **business**

DIVERS from the Defence Diving School on Horsea Island travelled to the Dive Show 2007 in Birmingham to lead a recruitment drive for clearance divers.

The team offered expert advice on all things Naval and gave demonstrations of the Service equipment.

So far 34 people from the day have signed up for a career interview, and the divers hope to welcome some of them down to Portsmouth on a Pre-Diving Acquaintance visit.



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For those with a strong interest in military and international history, this innovative degree programme offers the opportunity to discover how warfare and statecraft have shaped the major events of the last 200 years.

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Or just call Kath Capper on

0161 295 5540

Please quote ref number: 14674





Childcare savings

THE Armed Forces Childcare Voucher Scheme is up and running, offering the chance to save on tax and National Insurance (NI).

As we reported in December, the scheme, run by Sodexho Pass Ltd, is available to all members of the Armed Forces, and allows personnel to reduce the cash element of their salary in favour of childcare

By doing so, tax and Nataional Insurance are calculated on a reduced salary, bringing savings of up to £1,195 a year, depending on circumstances. Vouchers of between £30

and £243 each month can be claimed.

For more details visit the website www.MODchildcare

Accidents happen just tell somebody!

WHAT would you do if you had an accident at work?

What if it resulted in you having to take time off? Or prematurely ended your career?

How would you cope, especially if it continued to affect you, even in retirement?

What can you do to protect yourself and colleagues from accidents and potential injury?

The simple answers are: Report all accidents - no matter how trivial; reporting a trivial accident can prevent a more serious reoccurrence.

To put this into perspective, in 2007 over 1,000 accidents in

and injuries that occurred, which means almost half of all accidents are never reported.

Hopefully, if you were to suffer an injury, it will only be trivial – but it could be much worse.

So, what are the impacts of good reporting?

If accidents are reported the circumstances can be investigated and if necessary equipment and/ or procedures can be adapted or changed to reduce the likelihood of the accident recurring.

And remember, reporting of all accidents should include 'Near Misses', incidents that have the potential for injury - slipping on a deck may not injure you, but it could do the next time.

equipment you're using will be capable and work properly.

Rates of accidents and injuries

reported are used by supervisors, COs and senior officers to measure levels of safety in ships and units and across the Naval Service.

Under-reporting of accidents and injuries provides a misplaced sense of well-being.

A full and timely accident report will support any need to seek future compensation.

Reducing the number of accidents and injuries and keeping good records will mean that money spent on compensation claims against the MoD can be better spent elsewhere.

Last year the known cost was £88m including £16m legal costs. Finally, there is a legal requirement for all accidents and injuries to be reported.

Personnel tend to have a common misconception that by admitting to having had an accident or near miss they could get themselves into trouble.

The last thing that anyone wants is to be blamed for something – this is human nature.

Because of this, all accident reporting in the Naval Service is out what went wrong and so ensure that it can be prevented from happening again.

Reporting incidents is easy - just complete the Naval Service Incident Report Form (NSIR01).

Once completed and signed, take the form to your line manager and SHEF Advisor for comments and acknowledgement of sight of

the report.
Should you encounter problems when completing the form give the Naval Service Incident Notification Cell (NSINC) a ring or send an email requesting advice.

The original NSIR01 form stays with the ship, unit or establishment that you're serving in and a copy must be sent to NSINC in Fleet HQ, Portsmouth, at Naval Service Incident Notification Cell (NSINC), Fleet HQ, MP4-3, Leach Bldg, Whale Island, Portsmouth PO2 8BY.
Telephone numbers: (023)

9262 5151 or (023) 9262 5882; mil: 93832 5151 or 93832 5882. For DII email contact

FLEET E-NSINC MAILBOX or fleete-nsincmailbox@mod.uk

Hmm... Bavaria or Australasia?

EXERCISE Bavarian Surprise 08 (BS08) is an adventurous and challenging activities expedition that will be conducted in the

Allgau area of Bavaria, Germany. Its aim will be to provide members of the Naval Service an opportunity to participate in a multi-activity sevenadventurous training and

challenging activities package.

The exercise will start on the March 2 and run until September 28, with groups of up to 50 personnel rotating through the exercise each week.

Participants travel to Dover to meet the rest of the week's group before embarking on the ferry to

A luxury German coach then whisks them overnight to Bavaria. Upon arrival, after a briefing and kit issue, there is then a chance for some sightseeing before activities

begin the following morning.

Accommodation is at Haus
Schwaben on half board with packed lunch, friendly staff - and

excellent German beer. No personal contributions are

ANY time, any place, anywhere – so long as it is within the vicinity

of junior rates' accommodation of

training establishment launched

The Gosport engineering

required this year excuse to miss out.

Talk to your Divisional Officer or visit the website www. englishguesthouse.co.uk and use the Bavarian Surprise link.

If Germany doesn't take your fancy, how about a spell Down Under? The Long Look programme is

a multinational, trilateral exchange between the Armed Forces of the UK, Australia and New Zealand.

The 140 exchange participants are drawn from each of the three Services and represent a wide

range of employment groups.

RN officers and ratings,
normally at the Lt / SLt / WO
/ Senior Rate / Leading Hand
level, are employed primarily on
a reciprocal basis within their respective host units.

The basic criteria are that volunteers need to be recommended, medically fit, free from welfare problems and must have at least 18 months left to

Full details are set out in RNTM

Through innovative use of

both facilities and technology

the education and training of

sailors will become that bit more

The focus will shift from instructor-led learning to personal

learning of the underpinning

knowledge necessary to achieve

to be

success.

'normal' classroom.

Wi-fi will allow for training

delivered outside of

Servicemen and women free of The move is a "gesture of appreciation" by the Cheshire local authority to war-weary troops. The initiative means members of the Armed Forces can have free use of facilities in any of the borough's

Leisure

facilities

are free

to forces

CONGLETON Borough Council believes it is leading the way by

opening up leisure facilities to

five leisure centres, including Malkins' Band golf course. Troops returning from duty in places like Iraq or Afghanistan will have free use of activities such as swimming, aerobic and keep fit

classes, interactive fitness suites and golf. Andrew Thwaite,

retired RAF squadron leader who spearheaded the scheme, said: "After a career initially at sea, largely in the Middle East, followed by 29 years in the RAF, I am very aware of the severe risks and hardships our service personnel are undergoing 24/7 in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"From talking with those who have served in Basra, the extensive media coverage and the casualty rates it is obvious we are operating on a full war footing in Iraq and particularly so in Afghanistan.

"The description by a neighbour's son of the conditions and risks within the airfield perimeter at Basra were staggering.
"I felt that we should recognise

the effort the borough's young Servicemen and women are making on our behalf.

"In the USA Service personnel, including visiting UK Service personnel, get substantial concessions on travel, accommodation, leisure pursuits and so on, and are made to feel they are doing a worthwhile job for their country.

"While there is not much we as a council can do individually, we aim by making this gesture of waiving entry fees for serving personnel to the council leisure facilities, to show our appreciation and hopefully help them relax while home on leave."

He added that they know of

no other authority making such a move, and hoped that "other councils may follow Congleton's initiative."

Council welcomes the troops

WEAR Valley District Council is to hold a civic reception for members of the Armed Forces returning from the Gulf, Iraq and Afghanistan.

The reception will be staged in the early part of this year, and will be for troops living in the Wear Valley, Co Durham, and their families.

Chief Executive Michael Laing said: "The council wants to recognise the contribution of Her Majesty's Forces and their families.

'This event is to say 'thank you' to them on behalf of their home

To nominate a relative, contact Stuart Elliott at Wear Valley District Council, Committee Section, Civic Centre, Crook, County Durham DL15 9ES, email s.elliot@wearvalley.gov. **uk** or call 01388 761511.

It's your 2-6

NEED to get your message across to the rest of the RN? To feature in 2-6 contact Lt Cdr

Gregor Birse (Fleet Media Ops), 93832 8809 or Lt Cdr Harvey Burwin (DPR(N)), 9621 85984.



• Members and staff from Pembroke House were invited by brewers Shepherd Neame to the launch of a specially-packaged edition of Spitfire Ale, which will suppor the Help for Heroes charity

Help floods in for heroes

RESIDENTS and staff from the RNBT's care home at Pembroke House, Gillingham, were invited by the Shepherd Neame Brewery at Faversham to the launch of a fundraising initiative which will help Service personnel injured on operations, particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The brewery has launched a limited edition packaging of its popular Spitfire Ale, highlighting the work of the recently-created Help for Heroes charity with the profit from the sales pledged to the new charity.
Supporters of the charity

include former and serving members of the Armed Forces and well-known public figures and celebrities, including TV presenter Jeremy Clarkson and musician James Blunt. The special edition beer was also

sent as Christmas gifts to personnel returning from Afghanistan and tnose the Defence Medical Services Rehabilitation Centre at Headley Court, in Surrey

In a rather different vein. Royal Marines Commandos have gone topless for a Commando Hunks calendar, with £1 being donated to Help for Heroes for each one





• Mr July (left) and Mr September in the Commando Hunks calendar

The 'models' are all serving at CTCRM Lympstone; many have served in Afghanistan or Iraq and know first-hand the traumas of loss or injury among comrades.

Capt Sean Lerwill RM (Mr July) said: "We are very proud comrades, and many of us have known Marines who have lost

Leominster:

Abergavenny;

DATES and details of the RN Presentation Team's

Weds Feb 6: The Royal Oak, South Street,

Thurs Feb 7: The Hill, Pen-y-Pound,

Tues Feb 12: Hartlepool Historic Quay, Maritime

Weds Feb 13: Auckland Castle, Bishop

Avenue, Hartlepool Marina, Hartlepool;

"Knowing we are doing our bit to support injured Servicemen and women when they return from the battlefield makes doing something like this really worthwhile."

The calendar, at £6.00 plus £1.75 UK postage and packing www.castle-storm.co.uk or by phone on 07518 041556.

RNA backs charity - page 29

Christmas to bring students the culture of mobile learning - 'any time, any place, anywhere

wi-fi facility

events for the coming months are:
Tues Feb 5: Stoke Town Hall, Glebe Street,

Weds Feb 20: The Abbey House Hotel, Abbey Road, Barrow-in-Furness;
Tues Feb 26: The Castle Green Hotel, Kendal;

HMS Sultan.

Thurs Feb 28: The Rendezvous Hotel, Keighley

Anyone wanting to book a place at a presentation should contact the RNPT on 020 8833 8020 or email rnpt@gtnet.gov.uk

Royal Navy Presentation Team dates

Such modernised training delivery will bring benefits through individual learning, group working and the opportunity for trainees to conduct effective study and consolidation outside their core working hours.

Trainees will be able to reinforce learning and it is hoped that the result will be better trained, motivated and more confident personnel for the Fleet.

News and information for serving personnel

News and information for serving personnel



Caribbean conquests

A SILVER statuette of Admiral Lord Thomas Cochrane on an ash wood base (above) joined the ranks of RN trophies in 1988 when it was bought to mark the 50th anniversary of the commissioning of the establishment which bore

the same name.

Trophy No 24697's subject had a major role in the capture of two Caribbean islands from the French early in the 19th century. In tandem with General

Beckwith, commanding the Light Infantry Regiment, Cochrane's fleet of 46 vessels took Martinique on February 24 1809.

Despite a stiff rearguard action by Admiral Villaret de Joyeuse, the colony - which had been returned to France under the Treaty of Amiens – finally fell to the British.

And almost a year later, on February 10 1810, Guadeloupe - which had also been returned to France under the Treaty - was also taken, this time by a Naval force of 49 ships and 3,000 soldiers of the East Yorkshire Regiment under the command of Beckwith.

Extensive survey will shape future of Navy

IT MAY be the chance to help shape a better future for the Royal Navy.

Or it may just be the prospect of an easy £1,000 for a few minutes of your time.

Whether you are motivated by altruism or acquisition, you will be taking part in an historic tri-Service survey which promises to test some long-held beliefs – and is also likely to come up with some unexpected answers. VISP, which stands for

Valuing and Investing in Service Personnel, will be the first systematic examination of how a range of established Armed Forces mechanisms are coping with such fast-changing elements of Service life as allowances, accommodation, career progression and the like.

That is because many of the existing rules and regulations developed piecemeal, either for historic reasons or because something just felt right, according to project leader, Senior MOD Occupational Psychologist Anthea

Lemmon.
VISP was born two years ago when analysts identified the need for better tracking of the attitudes and expectations of personnel as their careers develop.

National Audit Office scrutiny of recruitment and retention in the Forces also concluded with a recommendation that 'longitudanal research' - in this case, following a group of people over extended period of time would be a useful tool in the campaign to attract and keep the right

sort of people.
"VISP will enable to assess the

impact of policies upon the same individuals at different points in their careers, providing us with evidence to develop the most effective policy and practice to motivate and support Service personnel throughout their careers," said Anthea.

VISP will also mine data from the JPA system to allow detailed long-term analysis of the effects of deployments, training, bonuses and the like on men and women at different stages of their careers.

That, said Anthea, will also give the MOD more muscle when it comes to jostling for a share of the Treasury's largesse, "especially in the context of a pan-Government emphasis on evidence-based decision-taking and policymaking."

The use of such data from JPA will, as with VISP in general, be undertaken with a strict policy of anonymity, and the detailed analysis work will be carried out by

Valuing & Investing in Service Personnel staff at King's C o l l e g e London (or KCL), led by Professor

David Guest.
VISP has been honed by the use of a pilot of a pilot questionnaire, which went out to more

than 5,000 people in September 2006.

That figure will be dwarfed by VISP proper, which will be sent to around 50,000 personnel, of which more than 16,000 will be Naval Service.

The first phase starts this month, and surveys will be in circulation for up to 12 weeks.

And the simple message from Anthea is: Make sure you fill it in and return it.

"This is the biggest survey we have ever produced, and we need people to co-operate," said "If you do take part you will be

followed throughout your Service career to see how it lived up to expectations. 'What were you promised, and

how does it match up to the reality?

The project has the potential to last for decades, but the initial funding is for two 'sweeps', now

and in late 2009 or early 2010.

That will ensure that the younger age groups - VISP is targeting the 18-27-year-olds in the early stage of their careers - can be canvassed before some of them make use of early-release opportunities.

If VISP is successful – and

with a top draw 'prize' of £1,000, and ten more of £100 adding an incentive at each stage, that is quite feasible – there will be a huge amount of information to

And Anthea is in no doubt that some of the answers may ruffle feathers.

"Some will focus on the negative aspects of VISP, but it will give the military a chance to get their ducks in a row on the basis of sound information," said Anthea.

The project has also been discussed in the House of Commons, with then-Defence Minister Ivor Caplin commenting that the study's aim was to target MOD resources more effectively and to further develop personnel policies to boost retention.

And with KCL involved, there can be no accusations of burying any unwanted findings the academics will publish their reports in full in public.

For more details see www. kcl.ac.uk/visp or on the MOD intranet go to bravo.dasa.r.mil. uk/visp/home.php



ETM cadre get together

HMS COLLINGWOOD will host the 2008 Engineer Training Manager (ETM) Specialisation Conference later this month.

The event will take place on Tuesday February 26 at the Maritime Warfare School. Organisers say the event will

present ETMs with valuable information on key issues within the profession, as well as providing the opportunity to discuss innovation and change within RN and broader military training.

The format will be based around presentations from keynote speakers, and following the conclusion of the day's presentations there will be an evening social event.

If anyone has not yet received details of the conference or wants further information, contact Lt Cdr Pete Le Gassick on 93825 2566 or Lt Rory Grinsill on 93825 2376.

Focus on finance

THE next Defence Strategic ResourceManagementProgramme will be held from April 7-11 at the Defence Academy, Shrivenham, and places are still available.

Offered to military officers and MOD civilians at one-star level or higher, the course gives a better understanding of MOD financial planning and control systems in the decision-making process.

For more details and booking, contact Shelley Grattidge on 01225 449652 or email shelley. grattidger697@mod.uk

Three simple steps to save up to £1,195* on your childcare



We know that juggling work and home life can be difficult - there simply doesn't seem to be enough time to get everything done! Everyone needs a little help now and then and we, at Sodexho Pass, can do a small part in helping you ease the financial burden of childcare. The benefits of childcare vouchers are very real up to £1,195 in tax savings or £2,390 if your partner also takes vouchers so sit back and let us explain a little about our childcare voucher scheme.

Childcare vouchers are a government initiative designed to help working parents pay for childcare. You can convert part of your salary into vouchers - up to £243 per month - saving the tax and National Insurance you would normally pay on that amount.

The vouchers are part of your pay so you will receive your childcare vouchers in line with your monthly pay. You can choose to receive paper vouchers at your correspondence address, or e-vouchers, which are by far the most popular choice and allow you to go online and make direct payments into your carer's bank account.

We look forward to hearing from you. Yours Sincerely, The Childcare Voucher Team, Sodexho

Childcare vouchers - it's as easy as 1,2,3

By taking up to £243 of your salary as childcare vouchers you can make savings of up to £1,195

This is because childcare vouchers are exempt of tax and National Insurance contributions. It really is easy for you to benefit from this:

- Sign up completing one simple form.
- Decide how many vouchers you want.
- Enjoy your savings by your next pay day.

If you have any further questions our friendly Customer Services Team is just a Freephone call away – 0800 066 5075 or visit our website at www.MODchildcare.co.uk



MOD Childcare Voucher Scheme Delivered by



Managers seek ideal balance

REQUIREMENTS management and career management deal with the same basic 'raw material' – the men and women of the Navy - but look at it from opposite views.

Requirements management deals with groups of people, whether a branch, a specialisation or even skills-based cohorts.

That involves planning for what the Navy needs today and tomorrow, and it covers three main areas

Branch management is getting the right numbers with the right skills in the right place at the right time, including recruitment and promotion requirements.

These people need to be trained, and the training establishments design and deliver courses according to guidance from the requirements managers – often training that meets both military and civilian criteria.

The final element, casework, is the area where requirements managers have direct contact with individuals, be it long-term employability following injury, transfers to other branches or processing applications to rejoin the Senior Service.

At the other end of the spectrum are the career managers - the human face of the NPTs.

They ensure that billets are filled by the right people, look to make best use of an individual's abilities, and to build in personal



MANY places have lain claim to the soubriquet "centre of the universe", including Times Square in New York and Wallace, Idaho.

But for the Royal Navy, the centre of the universe lies just east of (but not within) Leach Building on Whale Island.

West Battery is the exact location, for since late last year it has been the home of the Naval Personnel Teams (NPTs), who help senior ratings and officers along the paths of their careers.

It is also the hub in the new 'hub and spoke' system of managing the careers of junior rates – the Waterfront Manning Offices (WMOs) are the working end of the spokes.

And all the expertise, the knowledge and the information at West Battery is there just for you, ensuring that everyone gets the best in terms of using and developing their talents.

The new Directorate of Naval Personnel (DNPers), led by Cdre David Dickens, is now up and running, and comprises six NPTs



Cdre David Dickens. DNPers

and Medical, the Royal Marines, the RFA and the Reserves.

So the moment you walked through the gates of BRNC Dartmouth or HMS Raleigh, you were under the wing of an NPT.
Together the NPTs cover all

career-orientated manpower issues, training policy and representation of individual interests across the Fleet.

And the fact that West Battery is now home to both branch and requirements managers and ratings and officer career managers means that a coordinated approach to personnel

is now almost as simple as a stroll along a

NPT Each responsible for all aspects of meeting the demands of managing Naval personnel in order to support operations, and they cover all areas from individual assignments and so on to long-term

strategic planning.
The WMOs are part of the NPT structure and work directly for Cdre Dickens. They responsible all matters such as assignments, training course bookings and employment for junior ratings

WMO have a career adviser available for all branches, who will be and assist

career paths and jobs, training course bookings and employment ashore.

It is the same service offered by career managers to officers and senior rates, but they are conveniently located close to front-line

There are a few exceptions for junior ratings; see 2007DIN1-114 for details of points of contact for some specialist sub-branches and those with unusual

deployment patterns.
As Cdre Dickens said: "The NPTs bring together expertise in employment, individual future manning policy and career

management.
"They are a true 'one-stop shop' for all personnel matters

across the Fleet.

"Basically, if it involves Naval personnel, contact your NPT."
The former DNCM (Directorate

of Naval Career Management) and Fleet Pers system – in which career managers and branch managers were separated - was working well, so why the change?

The search for continuous approvement identified an improvement opportunity to collocate RN manpower co-ordination under one roof – West Battery.

It may seem an obvious plan, but it is a new departure for the Navy to have branch, career and requirements managers in one

The majority of 'shop-window' functions will not change.

Careers will still be developed on an individual basis, for officers and senior rates through their career managers at West Battery, while junior rates will receive counselling via WMOs, underpinned by ratings career managers at West Battery.

It is in the 'back room' that the move has already yielded benefits
– it is far more straightforward find the right person to deal with your questions, and it helps managers make the right decisions.

And those decisions are made much more quickly, with managers having a better feel for what is happening from the personal level through to the future of a branch.

Human Resources staff now sit alongside their colleagues in a coherent DNPers team, and are therefore readily available to provide some words of advice it is now as simple as nipping a couple of doors along.
In addition, requirements

managers – formerly branch managers – are also embedded in the new system as part of the

CWEM(O) 'Jacko' Jackson, who has worked in rating career management for several years, said:
"Since the NPT(Engineering)
came into existence, the inter-desk liaison has really improved.

"Whereas looking after our senior rates in the surface Fleet used to often involve timeconsuming formal meetings and emails, it can now be as simple as walking down a corridor.

"The experts in each area are close to hand, and we now get accurate answers in far less time.

"Also, the tea-boat is far cheaper..

said that another difference between his days at HMS Centurion and now was quite marked.

"Then we used to draft people,"

he said.
"We would say 'we have got a draft in a ship', and we would

and that if a sing, and we would find a person to fill it.

"The emphasis was not on the management of a person's career.
"We now try to look at an

individual from when he or she joins the Navy to when he or she

Manpower within each branch or arm of the Service is now managed by a dedicated NPT team leader.

With its ability to provide a service encompassing present and future branch manning requirements, co-ordination of and allocation to training plus career management thereafter, the new system offers a genuine career-long service for everyone – and hopefully buries the

The new structure, then, is not an attempt to correct former shortcomings, nor is it change for change's sake – it is simply seizing a golden opportunity to brigade and improve all the wider naval manpower support services.

frustrating 'dockyard runaround'

of old.

Capt Mark Slawson is the leader of the Engineering NPT, which was chosen as the

"We are really glad we led the way," said Capt Slawson.
"We have demonstrated that there are huge benefits in having the career management, the

requirements management (the needs of the people and of the business itself) and the training requirements sitting

in the same place.
"We are already seeing the benefits, and I am hopeful that very soon our employees - the perso deal we will see those

contact details are due to be published in a DIN this month. NPT details are

benefits too."

also available via the Global Address List Address under FLEET-DNPERS

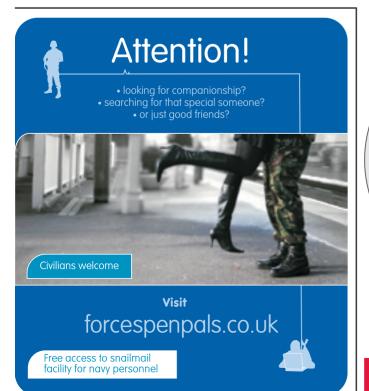
points of contact for some . specialist sub-branches and those with unusual deployment patterns



In West Battery, the solution to a problem may be just a door or two away

Pictures: LA(PHOT) Simmo Simpson

Z



who will be his days at to ask and what to ask and what to ask (Officers/Senior Ratings)

What are my promotion prospects? (Officers only) OJAR guidance and advice

Which officer will be joining unit? When will subject officer join? JPA Career Management concerns What's my next assignment?

(Junior Ratings*) **WMO** Career Manager What's my career path?

What are my career options? Where will I be employed when ashore? My personal circumstances have Which ratings will be joining my unit

and when?

JR TEM/PJT booking via Course **Booking Cell**

How do I become an officer? Can I serve abroad?

Branch and Requirement Manager

Complaints/

What's happening with my Branch?

Employment

specification changes

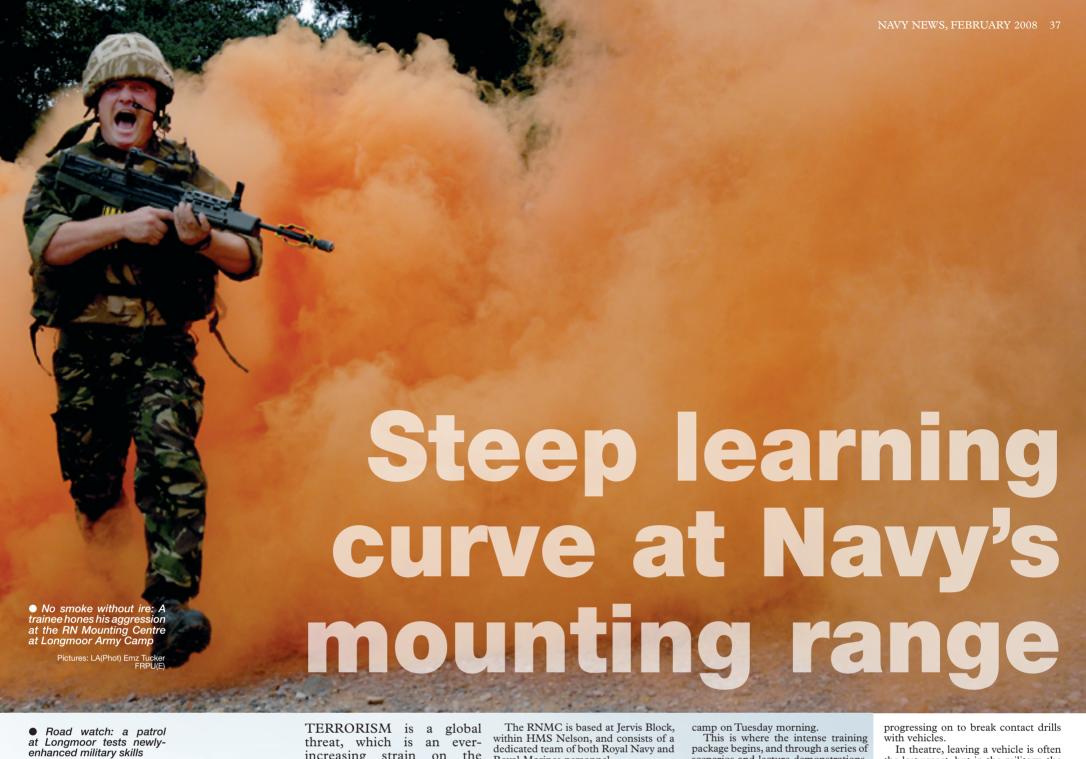
How do I create or end a post? Update on post change requests

What TEMs/PJT will I need to do?

How do I apply for Branch transfer?

* 2007DIN1-114 details

News and information for serving personnel



increasing strain on the Royal Marines personnel. military's commitment to the with the aid of pyrotechnics and Land Rovers, and with support from the Courses run 12 times a year, and joint efforts in Operations are constantly updated with the most RMART (Royal Marines Additional current information and standard Telic and Herrick, writes Cpl Resources Table – extra bodies brought in to act as the enemy), trainees can Carl Creasey RM.
The Royal Navy has therefore operating procedures to ensure that ach course contains the most pertinent develop an understanding of what it is information. not only been contributing to these like to be in a 'contact situation'.

The military skills taught initially The first part of the course starts efforts, but has increased its current with various admin checks to ensure seem alien, as naval personnel are taught methods and procedures which will relate to the tactics practised by that all Individual Training Directives (ITDs)/ Military Annual Training Tests commitment from 330 personnel to 450 acting as augmentees in (MATTs), such as the RN Fitness Test land-based operations. ground troops. and Annual Personal Weapons Test are Such deployments can be quite This in turn will help instil a better sense of tactical awareness for a daunting prospect, so it is the job of the Royal Navy Mounting Centre (RNMC) to conduct Individual Pre-deployment Training (IPDT), and advise on the most up-to-date information and to aid all parallel up to date for deployment.

During the first week all operational clothing is drawn, before conducting whatever environment in which they are deployed.

The basics of 'break contact drills' a progressive weapon-zeroing package on the local range.

The second week begins with a are both taught and tested before information, and to aid all naval series of mandatory lectures at the RNMC, before a 40-minute trip to the training area at Longmoor personnel preparing for deployment, so that they can conduct operations in either theatre with confidence.

This is where the intense training package begins, and through a series of scenarios and lecture demonstrations,

In theatre, leaving a vehicle is often the last resort, but in the military, the maxim is 'train hard to fight easy', so trainees are always drilled to expect and cope with the worst possible scenario.

The emphases of this exercise is to focus on the personnel drills and teamwork, and then incorporate speed and aggression.

Once confident that students are competent and gelling as a team, the whole training package culminates in a final exercise.

In this short time, Navy personnel are prepared both physically and mentally for their deployment.

It has become more likely that anyone in theatre could be directly affected by either terrorist activity or the insurgent threat.

Therefore trainees are taught skills on course that are basic, but proven, in the hope that it will instil a much greater sense of awareness on the ground

No one expects to create soldiers, but the course is designed to develop a knowledge base so that all our augmentees are able to conduct themselves in both a professional and safe manner, becoming a valuable member of any team.

Keen volunteers are always required, as with the right attitude, these deployments should not only be looked on as a challenge, but an opportunity to aspire and succeed something completely different, adding diversity to a career, which can only be beneficial in broadening a sailor's perspective.

See below for contact details and course dates.

- 24452; PO LOGS (Admin PO) - 22673; PO LOGS (Course **Manager)** - 22334; **Sgt RM** - 23987; **LH LOGS** (**Movements**) 22750; Cpl RM - 26314; E2 Admin Assistant - 22388.

Course dates are: **02** (Feb 5-12); **03** (Mar 5-12); **04** (April 23-30); 05 (May 14-21); 06 (June 4-11); **07** (July 2-9); **08** (July 23-30); **09** (Sept 10-17); **10** (Oct 8-15); **11** (Nov 5-12); 12 (Dec 3-10).

Bridge over troubled borders

military personnel pass through RAF Brize Norton every year on their way to Iraq, Afghanistan and other postings around the world. writes Simon Mander, of RAF Air Command Media

Of the total, roughly 60 per cent are Army, 30 per cent are RAF and 10 per cent are RN and Royal Marines.
Statistics show that the reliability of the airbridge is increasing.

increasing.

Between

Between February and November 2007, three out of four TriStar flights to and from Afghanistan arrived within an hour of schedule, while 85 per cent arrived within three hours – an improvement on 2006.

But statistics can't tell us

But statistics can't tell us everything, and the heightened operational tempo is placing additional pressure on the

airbridge. Sometimes things go wrong, or the situation changes, causing frustration for Service personnel and their families, and cuts into precious leave and R&R.

precious leave and R&R.
Senior officers are acutely
aware of the problem and
in recent months have
implemented changes to
improve the experience of
those using the airbridge, by
shortening waiting times and
handling delays professionally
and transparently.
There's a new coffee shop at
RAF Brize Norton with extended
opening hours.

opening hours.
Terminals offer internet access and information displays on everything from baggage allowances to routes to theatre and what to expect when you

Customer satisfaction survey forms mean that shortfalls in service can be pinpointed and steps taken to put them right.

And if there are delays, senior aircrew from that flight will, wherever possible, brief passengers in the departure lounge.

So, is the airbridge turning into a military version of a commercial airline? N o t Brize Norton Station Commander Gp Capt Malcolm Brecht, who says the changes, whilst important, make no difference to the essential nature of his

He said: "Military airbridge operations are not like running a commercial airline as we are connected by an umbilical cord to operational theatres.
"So when something happens

"So when something happens in Bastion, Basra, or Baghdad and they need us to respond, such as to an aeromedical evacuation, we have to prioritise.

"We do not have predictable schedules and we fly wide-bodied aircraft into hostile environments.

"Naturally we are very aware of the risks and take every precaution to protect those that we carry - and these factors themselves cause changes and themselves cause changes and

delays."

A few facts and figures illustrate the achievements of the Airbridge operation:

Since the start of airbridge support to Operation Telic in April 2003, the RAF has flown 353,675 personnel into Iraq – the equivalent of a city the size of Leicester.

equivalent of a city the size of Leicester.

Since the start of airbridge support to Operation Herrick in October 2004, the RAF has flown 115,357 personnel to Afghanistan – more than the population of Cambridge.

Over the same period, the RAF has transported 64,092 tonnes of cargo to Iraq, the equivalent of 1,025 Challenger 2 tanks or 5,341 double-decker buses.

It has also freighted 30,481

It has also freighted 30,481 tonnes of cargo to Afghanistan, the equivalent of 487 Challenger 2s or 2,540 double-deckers.

A recent survey found the standard of in-flight catering and the briefing of passengers with regard to flight information, including delays, to be the two main areas of complaint among users.

users.

But there are signs of improvement, with those rating catering as 'poor' falling from 11 per cent to 3 per cent between July and August 2007.

So what do the punters think – for example, those on the 1005 flight from Brize to a winter Sunday?

on a winter Sunday?
First up were
members of the
Naval Strike

arrived at Brize on a bus 15 minutes before departure after being processed through South

being processed through South Cerney.

CPO Ben Glenton said: "The biggest change I've seen is that the RAF fly straight into Kandahar now instead of going via Kabul, so there's not so much messing around.

"I'd used Brize Norton, but had never used South Cerney before. They were professional, everything went smoothly and when we got to this side all the baggage was there and nothing was ruined.

"The flight was good, the food

"The flight was good, the food was good, and the service was

Roval Marine Stuart Elks, of 40 Cdo, was

also positive as he prepared for his first operational tour.

He said: "The set-up here

seems the same as a civilian airport. It's been smooth so far, everything seems to be working quite well.

"There have been no problems or waiting around and no delays – yet. It's a nice atmosphere, quite relaxing."

Others

Others did not fare so well – Army L/Cpl Zoë Edwards could not be found on the system, and they eventually worked out that she was booked in as a 'Mr Best'.

But airbridge veteran Flt Sgt John Moorhouse, who has completed four tours of Iraq and two of Afghanistan, said he had noticed the changes in recent months.

He said: "Check-in is a

months.

He said: "Check-in is a lot quicker than it was and coming back last time seemed smoother. Having somewhere to buy a coffee and a paper outside normal opening hours is also very useful."

Gp Capt Brecht said: "When people criticise they should remember that roughly eight per cent of the RAF is based at Brize Norton, so we have personnel constantly flying in and out of the same airports as others, going through the

same processes and using exactly the same services.

exactly the same services.

"In any year some 1,000 personnel from the station serve in Afghanistan or Iraq.

"When there's a delay, passengers are not the only ones affected – the crew are subjected to it too, and some are subject to this lifestyle for their entire career.

"We live with the unpredictable

"We live with the unpredictable climate in Afghanistan and Iraq every day, and crews in particular can rarely tell family or friends exactly when they will be home.

"That's not a complaint, I'm not looking for sympathy – it's just the way it is, and we will continue to adapt to enable operations as best we can."

 Hercules and other military aircraft make combat landings under cover of darkness in hostile destinations

Flight schedule is 'relentless'

MAJOR General David MAJOR General David Shouesmith, the senior officer responsible for airbridge performance, said the need for a broader Defence-wide approach to tackling the challenges of the airbridge to Telic and Herrick, plus support to the Defence Exercise Programme, had been identified in late 2006.

A meeting of key senior

A meeting of key senior officers from front-line commands decided where further action was needed, and Maj Gen Shouesmith was given responsibility last year. "There are two things I would like to highlight," he

"Firstly, there will always be the potential for delay in moving people to operational theatres; weather, infrastructure and the threat levels might all affect plans in a way that civilian airlines simply don't have to deal with

deal with.
"We might also have to retask an aircraft at short notice for a strategic aeromedical evacuation task - which will

always be our highest priority.
"How we handle passengers under these circumstances is key, and I like to think that aircrew, and both RAF and Army movement controllers, got much better at this over the past year or so.

"Secondly, we should recognise the contribution



Maj Gen David Shouesmith

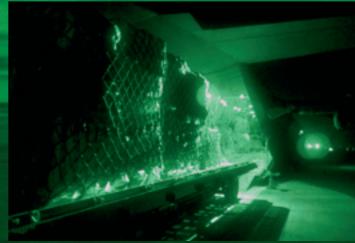
that RAF aircrews are making

that HAF aircrews are making to supporting operations, to Afghanistan in particular.

"Having spoken to a large number of crews over the past year during my own travels to theatre we should be under no illusions that the schedule of return trips for C-17 and TriStar crews is pretty demanding, and relentless.

"Be under no illusions

"Be under no illusions that they recognise their responsibilities for providing our lifeline to operations, and are fully focused on ensuring the safe movement of people and kit safely to and from



Movements staff normally based at RAF Brize Norton prepare freight for delivery to different regions of Afghanistan

An RAF TriStar is unloaded at Kandahar in Afghanistan

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SEA CADETS

Cold-weather ceremonial rig is unveiled for mayor



THE **Medway Towns** unit held their annual presentation to celebrate the achievements of all its cadets and adult volunteers at their unit headquarters

Mayor of Medway Cllr Val Goulden commented recently at a parade attended by the cadets that they looked cold and perhaps should be issued with nose and ear warmers for winter parades.

Never one to argue with the First Citizen, unit Commanding Officer S/Lt Stephen Small told the Ceremonial Officer, CPO Jim Manning to "make it so!"

The equipment was sourced and first used at the presentation

 POC Lewis O'Callaghan receives a certificate from the Mayor of Medway, Cllr Val evening at the end of last year. It is believed that the Mayor was delighted and surprised at the swift response as these things usually take a long time to clear through regulations...

Guard Commander POC Lewis O'Callaghan said: "The cadets spent ages getting the noses to shine up to the standard required by the Ceremonial Officer, and I think some of the antlers could have done with a bit of starch, but all in all it did the trick."

Parents and families were invited along as well as distinguished guests from the local community, including regular supporters such as the Royal British Legion, the Royal Naval Association, local

The Mayor was guest of honour and inspected her Mayor's Guard, which is paraded in her honour at certain events throughout the year.

As well as Best Cadet and other high-achiever awards, there are many awards for effort and consistency, leadership and teamwork which recognise the effort put in by cadets throughout the year – including four berths on the Sea Cadet sailing training ship TS Royalist.
The Medway Towns unit is

part of the West Kent district of the Southern Area, the other eight units being Chatham Marine Cadets, Dartford, Gravesend, Maidstone, Gravesend, Maidstone, Sheppey, Sittingbourne, Westerham and Tunbridge



 Members of the Medway Towns branch line up in their new cold-weather ceremonial rig - much to the delight of the Mayor of Medway, Cllr Val Goulden (back left), whose suggestion it was

Come listen to the band

THE Royal Marines are coming to Newhaven to support the local Sea Cadet unit.

On Friday June 20 the Band of HM Royal Marines Portsmouth will perform the Beat Retreat Ceremony at Newhaven Fort at a major fund-raising event for TS Defiance, the Newhaven and Seaford unit.

The unit is raising funds for a new headquarters so they can move out of the Old Chapel they presently use, where they "freeze in winter and boil in summer".

Two years ago part of the roof collapsed, putting the Quarterdeck out of use. TS Defiance is affiliated to the

Newhaven branch of the Royal British Legion and a party of members will attend the event. Gates will open at 6.30pm and

the ceremony will end at 9.30pm. Tickets are £12.50 for adults, concessions £10 and groups of

ten can buy tickets for £10 each.
Refreshments will be available, and tickets go on sale at

Newhaven Fort on March 1. To book telephone 01273 517622. Unit Chairman Chris Morgan

said: "We are very excited about this event.
"It is a long time since the

Royal Marines have visited Newhaven and we expect the event to be a sell out.

"Tickets are limited so people are advised to book early

TS Hurricane on parade (ground)

HURRICANE permanently on parade – or at least, permanently on the parade ground.

The Hornchurch Upminster unit had become concerned about the state of the "old and tired" concrete parade ground at their base at the Paddock in Wood Lane.

Apart from looking unsightly, there were also worries that the surface, which was cracked, uneven and showing signs of subsidence, would also raise health and safety issues.

Unit managers decided that a block-paved design would combine durability with impact – and the impact was provided by a colour scheme of charcoal and light-grey bricks, which were laid in such a way that the unit's training ship name was emblazoned across the centre of the parade ground, spanning the Training Deck to the

Eyres Deck.
The ground was also extended to take in a shabby patch of grass, which then linked the ground to an existing path for the adjoining ATC building.

Further afield, the unit received an invitation for an exclusive guided tour of Type 23 frigate HMS Westminster when the



• Cadets and staff from the Hornchurch and Upminster unit gather on their parade ground, which now proudly bears the name of the unit's training ship

warship was moored alongside HMS Belfast on the Thames just before Christmas.

The cadets went on board in the late morning, and on arrival were met by two of the ship's company, who acted as guides for the tour.

The visitors were given a thorough insight into how the ship works, taking in the bridge, operations room and ship control

centre, among other important sites.

The tour was universally well-

received, and to top it off the group was permitted to nip into McDonald's for lunch.

George searches for celebs

A LONDON cadet is seeking stars who have done their time in the Corps. LC George Whitfield, of

Southwark unit, is carrying out the research to add to the Sea Cadet Corps website.

The TS Cossack cadet has been given the task of hunting down the details of ex-cadets who are now famous.

These details will then be used on the website to help publicise the value of the Corps.

If you know of any footballers, film stars, politicians or the like who served in your unit, send details to david.4.bradbury@hotmail.co.uk

Honours for duo

WARMEST congratulations to two members of the Corps who were recognised in the Queen's New Year Honours list.

Lt Cdr (SCC) Nicholas 'Nick' John Moulton RNR, Commanding Officer of the **Rebel Trust**, was appointed to the Military Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire as a Member an MBE, in other words.

Mrs Doreen Nevard, Chairman f **Southwark** Sea Cadet Unit, was also made an MBE – an Ordinary Member of the Civil Division of the said Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

AN adult leader at Chelmsford unit has completed a 1,168 mile walk to raise funds for her cadets.

Midshipman Elizabeth Surrey walked from John o'Groats to Land's End and has raised £1,700 so far for the unit.
The 20-year-old set out from

John o'Groats on September 26 and walked 25 miles a day. Elizabeth said: "I'm quite a

keen walker but for the first week I did have blisters. "Every day I met someone on

the route and they were really nice Elizabeth said the money raised would be used to buy equipment

for her unit, which is affiliated to HMS Illustrious. It is one of the oldest units in the country, being one of the original 100 units set up.

Elizabeth, who was met by other members of the Sea Cadets at Land's End, is now waiting to join either the police or the Navy

She has been a cadet since the age of 14, when she saw them out on the river one day and thought it looked fun.

Last year, Elizabeth became London Area's first Midshipman.

• Elizabeth Surrey is greeted at Land's End at the end of her fund-raising walk from John o'Groats



Hinckley shine on parade

HINCKLEY unit ended the year in style by winning the Colour Party trophy at the Northampton and Leicester District drill competition.

The cadets had to learn how to parade the Colour, which included learning new parade movements nd hours of nractice their display.

The Colour – a flag awarded to a unit by the Queen - requires a special guard when uncased.

Hinckley competed teams from across Leicestershire and Northants, but they will now step up to the Eastern Area competition this month.

Commanding Officer Lt Neil Hartwell said: "This is a fantastic achievement for the cadets.

'It has taken a lot of hard work and dedication from all involved. "It shows what team spirit the unit has.'

The successful team was LCs Waton, Hartwell, Trigg and Parry, POC O'Connor and OC Dodds.

• The Hinckley unit Colour is paraded by cadets



SEA CADETS



Mark has completed **Dartmouth**

FORMER Stonehaven unit cadet Mark Paton has completed officer training at Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth.

The ten-month course included leadership, basic maritime skills, global studies, English and international relations.

It culminated in a maritime leadership assessment exercise which involved living on board a sea boat for four days, conducting wartime scenario exercises.

S/Lt Paton will now complete four months Common Fleet Time on board frigate HMS Iron Duke before starting Logistic Officer training at HMS Raleigh.

Stonehaven unit Commanding Officer Kevin Morris said: "I am absolutely delighted that Mark has completing his officer training in the Senior Service.

"Mark has shown during his time here with us at TS Carron that he has the potential to progress through the ranks and we all wish him well."

Ganges boys help Ruislip

RUISLIP unit were presented with a trophy and a cheque for £400 by the HMS Ganges Association (West London Division) at the veterans' last meeting of 2007 in the RNA at Hillingdon.

The money was collected in memory of the late Gwen Scotney, and was donated to the HMS Ganges Association by her family, some of whom attended the presentation.

The chairman of the West London Division, 86-year-old Bill 'Perky' Mellow, who joined HMS Ganges as a 15-year-old in 1936 and who was coxswain of a landing craft in the Dieppe Raid of 65 years ago, presented the money to James Parkinson, CO

of the Ruislip unit.

The trophy will be awarded on an annual basis to one of the Ruislip cadets for achievement, while the money will be used to fund courses and training equipment for the unit.

On behalf of the unit, which is based at Cordingley Road in Ruislip, James Parkinson thanked both the Association and the family for their generosity.

He was accompanied at the presentation by a number of unit staff, cadets and committee

Winning scouts take afternoon cruise



• 1st Watchet Sea Scout troop on board the Josefine in the Bristol Channel

A DOZEN members of the 1st Watchet Sea Scout Troop (RN Group 63) and Explorer Scout Unit spent an afternoon cruising the Bristol Channel in a traditional wooden boat.

The stint on the 66ft Josefine, a Danish oak sailing boat, was the prize for the winning patrol at the Scouts' summer camp in August.

During the trip the Scouts' Royal Navy pennant and ensign flew from the topmast – the first time on a tall ship at sea.

Josefine operates from Watchet, and sails the coastlines of the south-west, particularly those off Somerset, Devon Cornwall, Pembrokeshire, Lundy, the Scilly Isles and Waterford.

The boat can take 12 people for day sailings, and six for overnight cruising, in addition to her skipper

Guests are welcome to help run the boat by setting sails, navigating or taking the helm.

More details are available at www.sailjosefine.co.uk

During their recent Admiralty inspection by Staff Officer Sea Scouts Lt Cdr David Griffiths, County Somerset Scout Commissioner Gareth Davies presented a friendship scarf to Lt Cdr Griffiths to celebrate the centenary of Scouting and to acknowledge the important part the Staff Officer plays in the development of Sea Scouting and the friendship held between the Royal Navy and the Scouting

Leading Juniors Ashley Conway and Kieron Oates receive the Angus Pearson

Unit is star in the East

the Northampton Wellingborough unit ended in style with cadets taking part in a number of training activities.

Of particular note was a cruise in the offshore power training vessel TS John Jerwood, attended by six cadets from TS Laforey and TS Diamond.

In wintry conditions, with winds reaching Force 8, the vessel cruised to Weymouth, Cowes and Southampton, and the cadets learned about offshore navigation on the bridge, engineering in the engine room and cooking in the galley at sea.

The unit was recognised in the Eastern Area end of year awards presentation, with Northampton and Wellingborough being judged as the best unit in the Eastern Region, thereby placing the unit

as one of the six top UK units.

CO Lt Chris Read said: "This is the fourth year that the unit has received this award, and the competition is extremely tough as the top units in the area are of an

extremely high standard. "At the end of the day the cadets, guided by the excellent instructional staff we have at Northampton and Wellingborough, gave their all to achieve this impressive result."

The Stephenson Trophy, first awarded in 1948, has never being presented to a unit in four consecutive years, and they took another prize in the form of the Angus Pearson Memorial Shield for the Best Junior Sea Cadet section. TS Diamond – the

Wellingborough cadets form a division of the parent unit TS Laforey – is now based at the Cadet Forces Building in Spring Gardens, and has practically doubled in size in a year, from 14 to 25 cadets.

Tallow Chandlers' support waxes

MEMBERS of the Tallow Chandlers Company visited Southwark unit on their annual presentation evening, supporting the long-term liaison between the City livery company and TS Cossack - which includes generous financial support.

The Master, Philip Edwards, his wife, the Hon Catherine Edwards, Second Warden Ian Bowden and the Clerk, Brig Wilde, visited the stone frigate headquarters of TS Cossack for the occasion.

Mr Edwards, as Inspecting Officer, was met by a piping party and guard of honour before being escorted on to the maindeck for

Father Gregory Moore, who supports a number of local Sea cadet units, was present to conduct the prayers.

Entertainment for the evening was provided by the cadets with theme, including boatswain's call, bugles, drums and bell lyre.

A special guest assisting during the evening was Bugle Cpl Sue Wallace, of the London Irish Rifles Bugles, Pipes and Drums, based at the TA Centre at Connaught House in Camberwell – the cadets have a close relation with the band, which helps with training.

VIPs were glad to help with the presentation of awards.

LC Nathaniel Davenport received his BTEC First Diploma in Public Service - a level 2 NVQ only available to members of the

cadets forces, and equivalent to four GCSEs at grades A-C. Cadet of the Year was one of a

number of awards collected by LC

George Whitfield. During 2007 alone this cadet attended many training events, including a week at HMS Raleigh, a week at HMS Inskip at Preston, and a week at HMS Gannet at

the qualifications Among George has gained are Seamanship 1st Class, Marine Engineering 2nd Class, RYA Power Boating Level 2 and Leading Cadet.

Prestwick.

He was also selected to take part in drill displays at the Lakeside Centre and the National Trafalgar Day Parade in London.

In any spare time, George also took part in other ceremonial activities with the Corps, the London Irish Rifles and the London Nautical School.

Among the rewards were a 22in flat-screen computer monitor presented by ViewSonic Europe Ltd, whose headquarters are close to the unit.

The Tallow Chandlers is one of the 105 Livery Companies of the City of London, and dates back to the tallow-melters or oynters of around 1300.

It gained full livery status in 1462, and bought the site of Tallow Chandlers' Hall near Cannon Street Station in 1476, although the existing hall dates back to 1672, the original having fallen victim to the Great Fire of London.

The Company was formed to regulate oils, ointments, lubricants and fat-based preservatives and to manage candle making using animal fats (tallow), although it later took in other domestic products including sauces, vinegar, soap, cheese and herrings.

Today, the Company exists as a charitable and social body supporting various London based charities and retaining strong links with the lighting and edible oil industries, through various candle manufacturers, and FOSFA International (the Federation of Oils, Seeds and Fats Associations).



Fishquard cadet in top post

POC GARETH Chilton of Fishguard unit has been appointed High Sheriff's Cadet

for Dyfed at a ceremony held at the unit's headquarters POC Chilton (17) will accompany Col Dai Davies, the High Sheriff, on several of his official engagements until the end

of his term of office.

Gareth said: "I am honoured to have been selected to represent the Sea Cadets Corps, West Wales District and Fishguard unit and accompany the High Sheriff on his official visits, and to wear the official badge on my uniform."

Special award for Jamie

AS WELL as the first presentation AS WELL as the first presentation of two new trophies, one of Whitehaven unit's officers received a special commendation at TS Bee's annual presentations

More than 70 parents and friends joined invited guests – including the Mayor of Copeland, Cllr Anne Faichney, and the Vice Lord-Lieutenant of Cumbria, John Fryer-Spedding - to celebrate the cadets' achievements during the

The evening started with Mr Fryer-Spelling presenting PO (SCC) Jamie Mitchell (21) with a Commendation from Capt Jonathan Fry, Captain Sea Cadets, for his part in the rescue of the catamaran Hejira off Whitehaven in late September.

The Commendation noted that the way in which Jamie acted was "in the best traditions of the Sea Cadet Corps and was clearly very much appreciated by all concerned, not least by the Coastguard, who was able to release the St Bees Lifeboat for other duties as a direct result of your assistance."
Whitehaven CO S/Lt (SCC)

Keith Crowe RNR said he was extremely pleased that Jamie's part in the rescue had been



• The Vice Lord-Lieutenant of Cumbria, John Fryer-Spedding, presents PO (SCC) Jamie Mitchell with his Commendation

acknowledged.

"Although annual our Presentations Evening is really about the cadets, it is right and proper that staff achievement should also be celebrated," he

"We are particularly delighted Mr Fryer-Spedding accepted our invitation to make the presentation as it highlights the importance of a Captain's Commendation - they really are not made very often."

Awards to cadets followed, and included trophies for seamanship, engineering, sports and Cadet of the Year.

In addition, the Ray Bragg Trophy for offshore sailing was dedicated to the unit by Sandra McKee in memory of her late father, who had been a keen sailor long-time supporter of the Corps.

Another new trophy, the Willis Metherell Trophy for most improved cadet, was dedicated by Cllr Metherell, who also presented the unit with a cheque

Whitehaven's chairman, Chas Tinkler, said: "The point of our annual presentations evening is to recognise, reward and celebrate our cadets' achievements.

"Standards are becoming ever higher and it is increasingly difficult to decide who should receive an award. "We are extremely proud of all

our cadets.
"I would like to congratulate each and every one of them and also thank them for their hard work and dedication."

Badge of dishonour

Table d'or

UNDOUBTEDLY the largest volume ever to pop (or, more accurately, thud) through the *Navy News* postbox, Sam Willis' **Fighting Ships 1750-1850** (*Quercus*, £25 ISBN 978-1847241719) is the definitive 'coffee table' book.

book.

The author has not limited his research to the RN, but has cast his eyes around the globe to include other navies and conflicts beyond the traditional Anglo-French clashes (the latter, unsurprisingly, form the backbone of this volume, however).

The quality of reproduction is first-rate, with some magnificent paintings shown in all their glory.

But, above all, what is evident is that the maritime world has produced some of the finest art by some of the world's finest artists, from Nicholas Pocock to Geoff Hunt.

Fittingly, the story ends with Turner's Fighting Temeraire – voted the finest painting in a British gallery by the public – and the triumph of steam over sail.

Actually, such a tag is rather unfair. It's probably too large for most coffee tables, and its contents deserve much more than the cursory glance invariably afforded oversize picture

The author, a naval historian and consultant, charts the last century of warfare in the days of sail through paintings and a short but incisive commentary.

A few things stand out in this fine book

SOME wags joke that American servicemen earn a badge simply for flying across the Atlantic.

If badges, crests, medals and insignia are rife in the US military, they were rampant in the Third Reich.

More than
60 years after
the destruction of
Nazism, however, trade
in its uniforms, medals and
memorabilia is big business
with professional collectors and
wartime re-enactors – seemingly
much more so than the Allied
side.
The Cormon Navy is no

The German Navy is no exception. Artefacts and badges abound – and so too interest in them.

As a guide to this vast amount of memorabilia, medals and uniforms expert Christopher Ailsby has produced the profusely-illustrated A Collector's Guide to the Kriegsmarine (*Ian Allan*, £15.99 ISBN 978-0-7110-3099-2).

The author – wisely – does not offer suggested prices for items as they quickly date a book (at present a Narvik shield, awarded to veterans of the 1940 fighting in northern Norway will set you back

almost £400), but he does give a good indication of their rarity, or otherwise.

If Royal Navy badges past and present seem (a) manifold and (b) confusing, then the Kriegsmarine can probably top that (there were even insignia for teletypists and telephone operators).

And however odious and morally bankrupt, the Nazis really did produce some rather fine medals, definitely much more grandiose and lavish than anything on our side.

Indeed, they had a particular fondness for gold-plated medals with diamonds encrusted, often embedded in a swastika (tasteful – Ed).

Even as the Third Reich crumbled and men at the front were short of ammunition and equipment, German medalmakers

continued to churn out accolades. When the Allies overran France in 1944, they simply bypassed some ports and fortresses and continued eastwards. Some 26,000 men, chiefly sailors, were holed up in St Lorient... but they did have a gold shield as compensation.



• Eleven of the best... Royal Marine Commandos of 11 Troop – at the heart of Chris Terrill's book – fire 51mm light mortars at Taleban positions in the village of Chinah after coming under enemy rocket, RPG and small-arms fire

Picture: PO(Phot) Sean Clee, RN Photographer of the Year

Corps business

LOCKED in a pointless debate on an internet forum a few months ago, I bemoaned the fact that publishers only ever seemed interested in elite units: SAS Greatest Raids this, Inside Navy Seals that, writes Richard Hargreaves.

Chris Terrill, on the other hand, has spent the past dozen years dealing solely with regular forces, one regular force, in fact, the RN: two books and 12 documentaries have appeared out of the Terrill stable.

None really featured the Royal Marines, who were "only ever an aside", the filmmaker concedes. After concentrating on the regular, Terrill at last turns to the elite.

The result, Commando: On the Front Line, which aired on ITV last autumn pulled in over two million viewers per episode (top-rated dramas on terrestrial channels only draw about four million souls in our multi-channel, multimedia

The first series of the TV documentary—released last month on ITV DVD (£17.99)—provided us with some of the most visceral front-line combat footage since Vietnam three decades ago.

And when cameraman

producer/narrator Terrill downed his lens at the day's end, he picked up his pen, just as he did with his

excellent *Shipmates*.

Whereas the documentary often flitted between Lympstone and the front-line, the accompanying book

Commando (*Century*, £18.99
ISBN 978-1-846-05208-8) is much more chronological – and better for it.

Terrill spent eight months following 924 Troop through training at Lympstone and joined 11 Troop half-way around the world fighting the Taleban. Never one to do things by halves, he also earned his green beret at the ripe old age of 55.

It is Afghanistan where the book, more so than the TV series, really comes into its own.

While most of us were struggling back to work with bloated post-festive stomachs, 11 Troop spent January 2 2007 storming a Taleban stronghold.

The dozen or so pages devoted to that assault – just one more attack amid scores on terrorist bases and fortifications during the Royals' six months in Helmand – get to the heart of what fighting in Afghanistan is all about: pink tracer from Taleban guns racing

over a beige landscape; thick acrid smoke pouring over the battlefield; mud walls of enemy compounds collapsing after Apache helicopters have unleashed Hellfire missiles; "the sickening noise of a bullet against bone and flesh followed by a muted scream".

At the heart of the action that day was Mne Tom 'Vinders'
Curry – a proverbial
man mountain with
a personality to
match. He was
killed in battle

ten days later.

His comrade
hauled his lifeless
body out of harm's
way - 'Vinders' died in
an instant, killed by a shot
to the head – and wrapped
his face in a scarf grabbed
from a dead Taleban.

"I started to speak to Tom," the Royal recounted to Terrill er.

"Weird, I suppose, but I just wanted to talk to him. I said: 'Tom, sorry, mate, going to have to wrap your head in this. Hope you don't mind but it's for the best.' We all really miss him. Strong as an ox and brave as a lion. I hope they give him a medal 'cos he deserves one."

one."

'They' didn't. 'They' did.
however, mention him in

spatches.
Such remarks show the 'human'

side of the men who proudly wear the green beret. Warriors yes, but also men, human beings with feelings and emotions. To Terrill, this 'human' face of

To Terrill, this 'human' face of life in the Corps is important. He enjoys a 'hot wet' –a 'Julie Andrews' (white coffee – or 'white nun', get it?) which must, of course, be accompanied by a Hobnob for dunking – "a Marine's biscuit".

He samples Christmas Day with the commandos in Kajaki (his present from Santa's sack was a box of chicken 'cuppa' soup).

And he observes an admonishment posted on an office door: No shagging in this grot. If I find you in my room I will pork your girlfriend and then you. You have been warned!

Books on the Royal Marines abound. But there aren't too many about current operations. And there are fewer still written by an outsider looking in.

That provides some objectivity to the subject matter, but living, working, fighting side-by-side with the Royals for eight months, it's impossible not to become attached to them.

And after those eight months living with the Corps, Terrill comes to the conclusion that these men who proudly wear the green beret do indeed fight for Queen and country, but above all they fight for the man next to them – "They would do and die for each other."

Once more into the deep

CLEARANCE Divers have a bit of a reputation – "undisciplined and probably mad" according to Commodore Michael Clapp, and if you read this very entertaining book you'll see why.

Not that "undisciplined" refers to the way they do their job, or Tony Groom wouldn't have survived to tell his tale in **Diver** (Seafarer, £9.99 ISBN 978-1-57409-269-1).

But there is no doubt they revel in their reputation as the wild boys of the Fleet – hardworking, hard-drinking, and unable to suffer fools gladly. (There are at least two accounts of delayed score-settling in this book, hugely enjoyable for the reader as well as the author.)

Tony Groom opens his book in the Falklands with a hair-raising account of the helicopter flight to Bluff Cove, where he cleared the inlet ready for the landings, then he takes us back seven years or so to his initial

(very tough) training.
It's all vividly
described. Groom's
grandma noticed
very early in his
life that he was
born to dive

- "Look at that boy,
he just stares at the
water forever" - but on the
strength of this book he's a
natural writer too.

The middle chapters, about the Falklands, were mostly taken from his diaries of the time, and have all the immediacy and sense of disorientation one would expect.

The two Fleet
Clearance Diving
Teams were sent
almost as an
afterthought,
but ended
up removing
11 unexploded
bombs from
ships, in addition
to their other tasks.
They were the
gypsies of the task
force, as Groom explains:
"We didn't have any duties
on board, we didn't have a

mess, we were just there... and went where we were required, hunkered down and made it home for a while."
Groom's accounts of clearing Bluff Cove, and of shifting the UXBs from the ships, are

memorable. He explains that re-reading his diaries brought it all back to him as if it were yesterday, and that is how it reads.

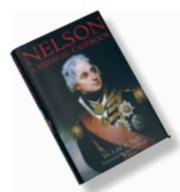
Equally memorable are his accounts of his fellow divers and their wild parties in the 70s and 80s – not suitable reading for the easily shocked, but extremely funny.

One thing puzzled me about the book – Groom received no medal other than the Falklands medal, and yet Commodore Clapp, in his afterword, states that man for man the Fleet Clearance Diving Teams got more awards than any other units down south.

Perhaps this book, cracking read as it is, will bring him recognition of a different kind.







Triumph of the ill

NELSON fascinates so many of us that he is an irresistible subject for scores of biographers, ranging from the inspired to the crackpot and the revisionist. (Some would even have it that his death was, in

effect, suicide.)
It is amazing that there is anything new to say – but in Nelson: A Medical Casebook (Spellmount, £20 ISBN 1-86227-321-9) Ann-Mary Hills has written the first major medical biography of Nelson, analysing primary sources, many for the first time, with a clinician's eye and the benefit of modern medical knowledge.

Beatty's famous account of Nelson's death, for instance, has been accepted for 200 years as the definitive account, writes Sarah

Dr Hills makes a persuasive argument that Beatty's was written with an eye to publication and, in showing the nation's darling gently slipping away, a romanticised version. The reality, given what we know of his injuries, was more awful and more traumatic.

She is also good on psychology. Nelson's well-documented depressions, characterised by lack of sleep and weight loss, were a reaction to events, not a symptom of manic depression, as others have claimed, and never compromised his sense of duty or his remarkable intellectual

Frequently Nelson's depressive periods were brought about by physical sickness and injuries. One of the author's demonstrations (unforgettable according to Colin White, who wrote the foreword) involves a human skull and a quivering blancmange, to show the effects on Nelson's brain of the blow he

received at the Battle of the Nile. Her analysis of the injury is that it was far more serious than was acknowledged at the time, and resulted in what we understand now as classic postconcussion syndrome.

Recognised symptoms include unkindness and irritability, both of which Nelson showed, most uncharacteristically, for several months afterwards, and which may well have accounted for much of his strange behaviour in Naples.

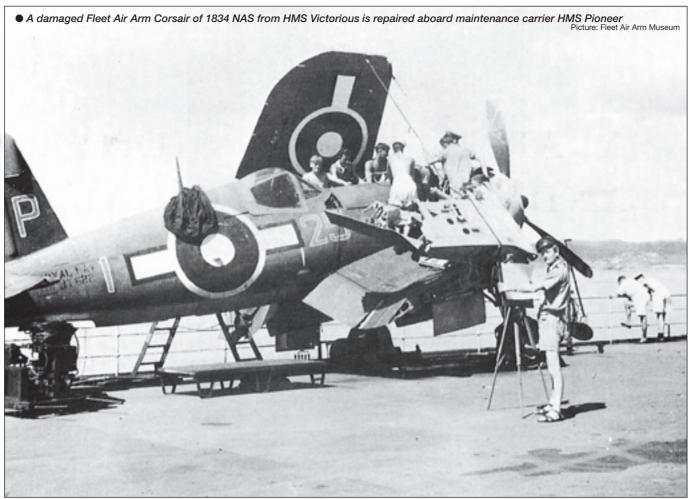
We tend to think of Nelson as a creaking gate, worn out by successive tropical diseases and injuries, and kept alive by force of will-power and his famous sense

So it comes as a surprise to read Dr Beatty's conclusions from the post-mortem – "... all the vital parts were so perfectly healthy in their appearance, and so small. that they resembled more those of a youth, than a man who had attained his forty-seventh year ... his Lordship might have lived to a

great age."
As Dr Hills points out, Nelson came from excellent genetic stock and longevity was a family trait. Nearly every hurt and illness was acquired in the course of duty, and he cared little for his own health, except when it prevented him from doing his job.

As he wrote to a friend post-Tenerife: "I regret not the loss of my arm in the cause it fell from

This is a fascinating book, full of insights, and one which I felt brought me closer to Nelson the man than any biography I have read.



The thin dark blue line

IT IS often said that amateurs study military naval equipment operations while professionals study logistics.

Despite their key importance in allowing forces to operate at all, naval logistics have been neglected by historians, writes Prof Eric Grove of the University of Salford.

Never were logistics important than over the broad reaches of the Pacific in 1945, when the British Pacific Fleet (BPF) was added to the mighty US Fleet to make a vital political contribution to the final defeat of

This would have been an enormous undertaking even if a traditional fleet of surface warships had been all that was required. In this case however, the vital assets were aircraft carriers and their air groups, a capability that required a logistical back-up that was unparalleled in British naval

history.

Cdr David Hobbs, formerly curator of the Fleet Air Arm Museum, is a respected authority on the history of Britain's naval aviation and we must be grateful that he has turned his attention to this important subject in Moving Bases: Royal Navy Maintenance Carriers and MONABS (Maritime Books, £20 ISBN 978-1-904459-

He first gives an overview of the creation of the BPF's air logistics organisation, including the 'air train' or Fleet Air Maintenance Group (FAMG) of maintenance and repair ships.

He then tells the story of these maintenance carrier, Unicorn. This ship had its origins in pre-war plans to operate the limited-capacity Illustrious-class carriers as a group with the main

One of the main lessons of the book is how fragile peacetime planning is when compared with actual operational dynamics.

Unicorn served as operational carrier, first with the Home Fleet and then with Force providing fighter cover for the Salerno landings.

She was then completed to fulfil her intended role, first with the Eastern Fleet in the Indian Ocean and then with the BPF.

Unicorn had an active career post-war, supporting carrier and other air operations in the Far

The Grove Review

East, notably off Korea whose coast the doughty repair carrier actually bombarded with her 4in

She was reduced to reserve status at the end of 1953. Plans for modernisation came to nothing and Unicorn was sold for scrap in 1959. Not the least of the positive aspects of the book is the story of this remarkable ship.

Two of the new light fleet carriers were completed along the same general lines as Unicorn. The first of these was HMS Pioneer (formerly HMS Mars) which lived up to its new name playing an active role in the BPF's air train.

Pioneer was, indeed, the only light fleet carrier hull to play a fully active role in WW2.

Her sister Perseus, like her operational sisters, arrived too late for the war, but in 1950-52 carved a small but key place in naval history by being used for the trials that proved the steam catapult to the Royal and United States Navies. outlived Pioneer and,

after a period reserve, was about to be converted to a submarine depot ship when she fell victim to the Sandys Review in

Only one of the converted Deer Sound, appeared before the war's end and she was used to support Pioneer.

The book then turns to the escort carriers used in the BPF mainly as ferry and replenishment ships and then to the Mobile Naval Air Bases (MONABs) and the Transportable Aircraft Maintenance Yard (TAMY) that were rapidly created and sent to the Pacific.

These were set up in Australia and at Ponam near Manus in the Admiralty Islands, together with a 'Forward Aircraft Pool' at Pitvilu, 20 miles from Ponam.

The shore system did not work as originally intended, the Australian bases taking over basic infrastructure, much of which had already been created.

The first MONABs used former RAAF airfields (the effort seems to have been admirably 'joint').

As Cdr Hobbs makes clear, "the production of MONABs at monthly intervals, which were capable of providing support for BPF aircraft within days of their arrival at an unfamiliar airfield, 12,000 miles from the UK, was one of the great achievements of the Royal Navy in World War 2."

The MONAB that operated as a forward base was HMS Nabaron, established on an American-built airfield, at Ponam in the Admiralties in early April 1945.

Even here, however, it was not quite what was intended. Much equipment brought out from the UK was redundant, given what was provided by the Americans. Indeed, as the author notes, "other equipment provided generously by the USN had no equivalent in the British outfit of stores but without it the air station could not have functioned."

The Americans also provided the location for Forward Aircraft Pool 1 at Pityilu, which made use of components of

MONABS 1 and 2 not required at Nowra or Bankstown. Adhocmay have been, but the BPF's air logistics tail operated effectively enough. allowing to make the Fleet to make significant contributions, both to the Okinawa campaign and the final operations against

Japan. If the war had gone on to culminate in an assault on the Japanese home islands, there were no less than fifteen MONABs and an extra TAMY planned.

As it was, only MONABs 10 and 11 made it east, the former providing facilities at liberated Hong Kong and the latter at Singapore.

The effort was huge and carried out with typical flexibility and 'can do' spirit, but the reader cannot but reflect on how tautly British naval power was being stretched in the final months of WW2.

The RN had nothing like the logistics tail of the Americans, an aspect of USN capability that is often neglected.

The American Construction Battalions ('Seabees') provided facilities on a remote Pacific island at Ponam better than those

provided from Imperial sources in Australia. When one combines this with the nationality of most of the BPF's aircraft, where many of the aircrew had been trained (all provided free of charge) and from where most of the re-supply escort carriers came, one is left reflecting on quite how 'British' this whole effort was.

The story has long needed telling and David Hobbs is to be congratulated for doing it so well. Maritime Books of Liskeard has done a good job in producing an attractive and well-illustrated volume, whose only shortcoming is a lack of maps, which would have helped explain things even more clearly.

Pocket-sized battleships

JUST as the day destroys the night and night divides the days, so each new year **British** Warships and Auxiliaries arrives in the post bag from the good folks at Maritime Books.

'And Auxiliaries' is pertinent for such has the Fleet shrunk, that half the vessels featured in this volume are either RFA support vessels (accounting for ten pages) or tugs and other ancillary craft (20 pages).

Despite a seemingly ever-decreasing Fleet, Steve Bush's book (£8.99 ISBN 978-1-904459-31-6) remains the standard in-your-pocket reference work on the RN.

It cannot, of course, compete with Jane's Fighting Ships in scale or scope. But as a cheap, at-aglance handbook on all things RN and FAA, it remains unbeatable.

And it's always worth buying for the sometimes acerbic and never wide-of-the-mark commentary on the 'state of the union'.
The 2008 edition is no

exception. The author, a former senior rating and Cold War warrior, welcomes the arrival of HMS Astute and Daring, the renaissance of Britain's amphibious force, the commitment to build two new

carriers.

But he laments the paucity of destroyers and frigates – "the traditional workhorses of the Fleet" which have been "rapidly and rashly – withdrawn from service" – "penny pinching" and, above all, the tempo of operations which is placing an ever greater strain on man and machine. "You can stretch an elastic

band for as long as you like, but you won't know it is over-stretched until such time as it snaps. Once that happens, there is no way back," he warns.

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Sam kind of wonderful

THE RN and RM combat shooting team headed to the deep south for their annual interational shoot-off, Exercise Uncle Sam.

Little Rock in Arkansas was the venue for the event - but before the two four-man teams headed to the USA, they spent a week at Bisley readying themselves, writes Cpl T Potts.

That meant dry firing, live firing and a spot of physical fitness (the fact that two out of five of the team were matelots apparently meant some crosscountry runs were required to prepare them for the 'march and shoot' element of Uncle Sam).

Before flying out to the US the team had a sponsors dinner night at the Artist Rifles' clubhouse – followed by a demonstration shoot with several 'Gucci' Heckler and Koch weapons: rifles, pistols and sub-machine guns. The phrase 'kids in a sweet shop

springs to mind.

The journey to Little Rock
was probably the longest day
ever – but if it wasn't then another record was apparently broken: most food consumed in

a given period.

There was, of course, dry firing, Beretta and rifle training, a check zero, run-down and match practices, plus shooting at distances of 400-600 metres.

Sufficiently fed and worked up, the teams were fired up for the second week of Uncle Sam the competition phase

Unfortunately, it got off to a bad start; the first two ETR matches did not count towards the result.

Nevertheless, after a dozen or so individual and team events for both the A and B squads, the B team took one first place and the A one third place. Most satisfyingly, however, the Brits collectively smashed the best time in a physical match on the final day.

Uncle Sam closed with an awards banquet where there was "some posh nosh" as well as a rather good speech by a former military aide to

President Reagan.
And with that the shootists prepared to return to Blighty... but not before they'd squeezed in a trip to Memphis and Graceland. Thank you very

Novices grab boxing titles

THREE RN personnel hold novice **boxing** titles after victory in the national finals at London's York Hall.

AB Ross Murray (51kg) Class B, Mne Joe Harvey (91kg) Class B and Mne John Winters (91kg plus) Class B all returned from 'the smoke' with trophies. For John it was the second title in six months, having already lifted the

Class A trophy.
At the RN level, HMS Collingwood hosts the RN Inter-Unit Cup on February 21 with the Fareham base determined to hold on to the trophy it won 12 months ago.

There will be ten bouts on the female bouts and youngsters from Gosport Borough Boxing Club to begin the evening). Doors to the SARC open at 1830.

The previous two nights, Collingwood's SARC also hosts the preliminary rounds.

Tickets for fight night are available from POPT Mark Brocklesby or LPT Daz Hoare on 93825 2625.

SUBMISSIONS for the sports pages of Navy News' March edition must be received by Thursday February 14.

You can send your articles via NavyStar to Navy News, via external e-mail to edit@ navynews.co.uk, or you can call us on 023 9229 4228.

No-one can match the Commandos

AFTER a break of some 12 years, the Services are getting back into sailing's match racing.

With each of the Services now owning at least one Laser SB3, the Royal Naval Sailing Association (RNSA) decided that it was about time that the they were put to good use re-introducing the art of match racing to Forces sailors.

As a result the Joint Services Match Racing Championships were staged in Portsmouth.

Eight teams, each from a different Naval Command or Army Corps, and a healthy mixture of dinghy and yacht sailors, arrived ready to battle it out on a benign Solent.

The first day was used for training to allow everyone to hone their boat handling skills in something bigger than Laser 2000, the standard services dinghy, and much smaller than the smallest Services yachts.

Alan Baser of the RYA, the event umpire, greeted competitors on the second day and gave a very well received brief on the rules and intricacies of match racing. With his salient points in mind the teams headed for the water ready for the two league round robin

stage.
With both pace and consistency the Royal Marines team, skippered by C/Sgt Grahame Forshaw, showed the greatest promise in League One, whilst the error prone antics of the teams in League Two left a three-way tie for the top

After some careful calculations the teams for the final on the



• The commandos race through the water on their way to the Joint Services Match title

last day were decided leaving the marines the favourites but with plenty of talent in the mix ready to push them all the way.

On the last day after some robust action but no damage, all but the final two teams were eliminated.

As expected, the Marines had kept their cool and made it through to the three-race final against the Royal Corps of Signals team skippered by Col Alex Tucker.

With a race win apiece the Joint Services Champions were to be decided by the last race of the

As is so often the case in match racing, everything was decided in a rather rumbustious pre-start sequence and it was the Royal Marines who came out on top before sailing a clean race to take

"To say that this has been a

learning experience from the beginning is an understatement," said RNSA Rear Commodore Dinghies, Cdr Wayne Shirley.

"We have learned a great deal already on the organisation of the event and lessons for next time.

"The event has massive potential and has already given eight teams a great introduction to match racing we will definitely be running this again next year.

A MOST encouraging fixtures weekend at HMS Drake saw the Royal Navy's Senior basketball squad win all three matches against some strong Devonian and Cornish opposition, writes Cdr Rob Knill, RNRM Basketball Association chairman.

Tough training soon transferred to the court with a very competitive first game against Plymouth University that saw the Royal Navy

complete a very controlled 81-68 victory.

Testing their fitness levels later in the same day with a smooth performance against local Plymouth league side Kitto Kings (running out 87-56 winners), this was ideal preparation for a terrific last game of the weekend against the very strong Founders Cup outfit Wadebridge

A real challenge for the Senior Service side, this highly-charged match had all the qualities required for a good game of basketball strength, fitness, skill, team work and finesse.

With no more than two or three points between the two sides throughout the whole

left on the clock with a fine three-pointer from captain ET(ME) Justin Campbell (HMS Sultan) – the final result being 91-89.

Although Campbell had the final say, several others contributed to an exceptional all-round team effort over perhaps the most successful

fixtures weekend in recent times
In particular, ET(ME)s Myron Campbell and Blair Charles, PO(MEA) Scott Chapman (also all HMS Sultan), ET(ME) John Enniful (HMS Ark Royal) and Mne James Woodcock (RMB Stonehouse) stood out. Things certainly bode well for the remainder of the season at the senior level.

Coming together for the first time this season, the junior squad also exceeded all expectations when pitted against well-drilled opposition and are already showing much promise for the remainder of the season as well as the Inter-Services in late April.

They ran local league side Liskeard Falcons very close in their first match only to be pipped at the final whistle 49-51, which impressed the new coaching team of Nigel Cheesman (HMNB Clyde) and POPT(RI) Stacy Watt (HMS Collingwood).

Further progress was made against Plymouth University and Callington Fury, losing 54-72 and 53-90 respectively.

Significant performances were put in

throughout a tough series of games, especially by the likes of WS Luke 'Manners' Manly (HMS Bulwark) and Andy Tavender (HMS Chatham) and ET(ME) Ben Whitacker (HMS Sultan) who as captain took a great deal on his shoulders and showed strong leadership.

All in all, this was a tremendously positive weekend of tough ball and the squad now looks forward to even stronger competition in HMS Collingwood on February 29 to March 2, at which the ladies squad will also run out against two local sides.

Further details about RN basketball from Cdr Knill at DE&S Andover on 94391 7641. For the senior squad contact Cdr Sam Baker sambaker@flagshiptraining.co.uk or 02392 339236. For the juniors, contact POPT Watt

and playing charades... naked. You can read the pair's diary at www.rowcommando.com Victory at

home for **Pompey**

Bad weather

go-slow row

Rogers and Capt Ben Gaffney didn't break the Atlantic rowing

As *Navy News* went to press, the duo's boat Go Commando

was still at sea, 52 days into its

great ocean, covering the 3,000

miles from La Gomera in the

In fact, no-one broke the

That was largely due to

less-than-favourable weather conditions, which for team Go

Commando reached their nadir

like some kind of never-ending

story – as if we were suspended in time," said Orlando. "We both made daily

calculations of average speed,

average weekly speed to best

predict our arrival in Antigua.

fact that effort on the oars was

not proportional to speed, and

weather man, we accepted our progress thus."

Depending on weather and

current, the marines covered

Weetabix for breakfast... or

perhaps the GPS was playing up - Ed) - although typically

clocking up around 60 miles

short of their goal.

with good conditions, they were

every 24 hours.
After 52 days in the water, the

two Royals were just 250 miles

boat considerably longer than

hoped, the duo managed to keep spirits up.
Aside from watching fish and

sharks – and being a source of

wonderment for passengers on a passing cruise ship – the Royals

have stayed sober by means only

Royals know: dipping into the

green berets' big book of jokes

And despite being in their 24ft

between 16 miles each day and

342 (they must have had three

as there was nothing we could do but pray to Poseidon and the

"We came to terms with the

"For us, these ten days seemed

over the festive season.

record on this year's race; the first

boat didn't cross the finishing line until Day 49 of the contest.

attempt to reach Antigua. The two officers had hoped to break the record for rowing the

Canaries in 37 days.

ROYAL Marines Lt Orlando

record sadly.

guarantees

THERE haven't been too many of those this season thanks to Pompey's rather hit-and-miss (more miss – Pompey fan Deputy Ed) home form.
But now there's a Victory

every match day at Fratton

The Premiership **football** team have named their largest hospitality suite after HMS Victory – and will help RN and RM personnel and their

children.
The Victory Lounge
- complete with an engraving of Nelson's flagship - was unveiled by the club and Victory's CO Lt Cdr John Scivier as Pompey announced closer ties between the team and the RN.

The club will give four tickets to every home game to the RN & RM Children's Fund - which helps the sons and daughters of serving and ex-serving sailors and green berets with financial support, including foundation places at Reeds School in Cobham, Surrey.

Pompey are also providing 100 tickets for each home fixture to the RN to distribute to personnel - and sailors from foreign warships visiting

Portsmouth.
"The RN and Portsmouth FC are integral parts of what makes the city of Portsmouth what it is today," said Lt Cdr Scivier.

Bees stinging

PERHAPS with a name like Manchester, it's not surprising that this ship is passionate about football.

The destroyer has mustered two deployment with the USS Harry S Truman (a ship's company well in excess of 200 helps with numbers, of course).

The 1st XI have, perhaps as befits their name and status, fared slightly better to date than the second team.

Both sides were in action in Catania, Sicily, where the 1st XI narrowly overcame Italian Navy side Maristaeli (it would, we're told have been 3-1, not 2-1, but for a 'howler' by LS(CIS) 'Not so

marvellous' Nelson).
The 2nd XI took on a US team from their naval base at Sigonella and despite giving 100 per cent effort (particularly impressive from a side with five players around the 40-year-old mark), the Bees went down 4-1.

A couple of thousand miles later, the 2nd XI trotted out (thanks to a mix-up) against Bahrain's 1st XI (gulp). Despite younger side, the destroyer men were no march for the locals and went down

Luckily for the ship, honour was restored by the first team who put on a scintillating performance, particularly in the first half, banging in four goals against the

Bahrainis for just one in reply.

Not content with fielding two football teams, the Busy Bee also has a healthy **rugby union** squad under CPO Miller.

The senior rate has reinvigorated the sport and refreshed links with top side Sale Sharks.

On the pitch, the Bees destroyed the American Eagles (NAS Sigonella) in Sicily.

Sadly, we don't have report from that encounter; we do have one from Manchester's next run-out against Bahrain

dispatched HMŠ dispatched Argyll.
The sailors opened the scoring with a converted try from TS/CIS) 'Pony'

Moore. Having scored first, the team were buoyed, but this early pressure merely fired up Bahrain who quickly realised the sailors had not turned up for a practice match.

They they responded by upping their tempo by a huge margin - and Manchester spent the remainder of the half on the back foot.

When the Bees swarmed forward, they could not break through the home side's defence, and were severely punished after a few missed tackles and some slick

moves from Bahrain's well drilled three-quarter line.

Both sides were trading some hard tackling, one recipient of note was WO2(WEA) 'Jan' Leeming, and getting tackled by Bahrain's honorary member and outside centre – Gemma, a student from England.

The game was played in a very good, competitive spirit, and with Gemma on the field for Bahrain, the Bees sent on ladies CS player, LPT Lou Clarke, the ship's clubz (and also Egg and Spoon Race Champ, U5s 1987).

The Medical Officer advised

that only five minutes would be suitable, but due to clubz's poor timekeeping, she managed to stay on for 20 minutes.

All in all it was an excellent effort and the result (30-10 to Bahrain) didn't matter... and WO2 Leeming won a new trophy - 'ex-fieldgunner tackled by a girl award'.



Richmond's records

THE crew of HMS Richmond smashed the 'row the Suez' record as they sailed through the famous canal, knocking almost an hour off the previous time.

Eighty members of the ship's

company rowed 2,000 metres apiece on machines, averaging 7m 46s for the 2km stretch.

The achievement was the highlight of the Portsmouth frigate's 'fit to fight' initiative intend to keep fitness levels – and morale – up during Richmond's six months in the Gulf.

The ship left Pompey minus a clubz initially, so it fell to deputy weapons engineer officer Lt Taff Reynolds to spur his shipmates on. Around one quarter of the ship's company took part in daily 'fizz' sessions, and a good 30 sailors ran three miles around the Type 23's upper deck every day. By the time LPT Jamie

Stickley joined the ship it was the height of summer. Was he deterred? Nope. He set up four daily training sessions to fight the flab.

The net result of this health

32 sailors managed to shed 170kg (374lb) between them apparently the weight of an adult panda bear;

16 sailors quit smoking; and the ship's company ran an estimated 13,980 miles and the rowers covered in excess of 21,700 miles.

■ AT THE opposite end of the world, HMS Nottingham's clubz LPT Kev Green (you might remember him as the boxer 'The Baby-Faced Assassin') has been the mainstay of sport and fitness aboard the destroyer.

The 42's sporting programme stepped up a gear when she reached the Falklands – her home for much of her South Atlantic deployment.

A sports day was arranged to

blow away any cobwebs.
The football side took to the pitch against MPA (who had a considerably bigger squad to draw upon).

Despite the 'locals' taking the lead in the first period, they were held to a draw thanks to a 25-yard screamer from LET

'Tommo' Thomson'. Slightly (we use the term loosely) less even was the contest between Nottingham's RU XV who faced an Army select side filled with Fijians and CS

representatives.

The score promptly reflected the Army's experience – 112-5, although Nottingham had the final word thanks to a try from LLogs Steve Foston.

The netball side took to the court for the first time in two years, narrowly losing to the Army and RAF.

Worth the weight

Continued from page 48 a technical event made up of two lifts, the snatch and the clean-and-jerk, where the weight is lifted above the head.

Powerlifting is a test of pure unadulterated, brute strength and comprises three lifts ('fullpower'); the squat, bench press and the dead lift.

Each competitor is allowed three attempts at each lift, the best lift in each discipline being added to their total; the lifter with the highest total is the winner. The sport is also divided into weight categories, although by using the 'Wilkes formula' competitors of different bodyweights can

compete against each other. Inspired by the success at the Inter-Services event, particularly with such a short time to prepare, the aim is to hold an RN Bench Press Championship to raise awareness and build a team ready to challenge for the Inter-Services trophy in 2008; date and location will be revealed in due course.



• Pigs can fly... AB 'Pig' Watson powers towards the line during HMS Hurworth's march of conquest

Promising omens

YOU can't beat a good David vs Goliath encounter.

Yes, we know it's clichéd, but these are the

sports pages after all.

Anyway, HMS Hurworth are over the moon and HMS Collingwood are the proverbial sick parrots after the minehunter's team triumphed in the MWS rugby 7s.
Which is not bad going considering the

Hunt-class ship boasts a ship's company of under 50 and Collingwood has several thousand matelots on its books.

In fact, Hurworth didn't just beat the Fareham establishment in the 7s final... they annihilated their first team 24-0.

So strong were the Hurworthers on the day that no-one managed to score a single try against them, while the minehunter men clocked up 12 tries. AB 'Gilroy' Hinds also

collected the 'player of the tournament' gong. One in three of Hurworth's ship's company made up the squad, led by CO Lt Cdr Andy 'Bossman' Woolhead and his navigator (and stalwart of RNRU) Lt Will Blackett, the team's player/coach/manager.

On the international scene, the Wildboars (HMS Argyll) took to the field for two narrow

First up were Bahrain RFC (Gulf champions), who proved to be tough but not overwhelming opponents under the floodlights.

Bahrain notched up a 12-0 win (a margin which might have been greater but for some crunching tackles from ET(ME) Gareth Smith - particularly impressive as he was playing his first game of rugby. (You might remember him as junior boxing champ 'Stingray' Smith.)

A much tighter affair was the clash against a veterans' XV in Doha, Qatar.

Two converted tries down after quarter of

an hour, the Qataris substituted many of their veterans for their first XV counterparts.

And so the scoring by Argyll stayed stuck on 14, while the locals ran in three tries to take a

one-point victory.

Elsewhere, it's been a blue start to 2008 for RN rugby union - nothing to do with results

though.

The first three fixtures of the year for the 1st XV are all 'blues': Newbury Blues (as Navy News went to press), followed by Oxford University (at Burnaby Road on February 5) and, crucially, away to Les Bleus, the elite of the French Navy, writes Lt Cdr Paula Rowe, Director of Communications Navy Rugby.

That latter fixture takes place in the Stade

Jean Bouin, home of Stade Français, on Friday February 22, with the Frenchmen determined to wrest the Babcock Challenge Cup from RN

hands after last year's defeat.

The senior side will be looking to carry on where the U23s and the Sharks left off just before Christmas.

The 'feelgood factor' within Navy Rugby continued at the end of December when two of the women's XV, Pam Williams and Sophie Roseamon, were selected for the RFUW South squad which will compete in the Women's

regional championship.

The standard at the trials was very high and so it is particularly pleasing that two Navy representatives were successful against such stiff competition.

The good news was passed to the two players by Navy Women's coach Dave Garner who himself had been invited to be one of the South's coaches for the tournament.

"Dave richly deserves this opportunity as he continues to develop into a very good coach. I am sure that he would wish to acknowledge the help he has had from former RN warrant officer and now RFU training manager, Will Feebery," said Lt Cdr Geraint Ashton Jones, RN Director of Rugby.

"Pam has been a stalwart of Navy Women's rugby for many seasons and this recognition is thus particularly well deserved.
"Sophie is a relative newcomer to the game

but has proved to be a committed player who is a good example of what can be achieved through hard work and determination."

Aside from the three 'blues' games, most RNRU eyes are fixed on the annual Army-Navy fixture at Twickenham in just three months' time.

Long-term, victory over our traditional foe is, of course, the goal, but there's a lot of rugby to play before then.

"There is a real buzz throughout the senior

squad at the moment and more importantly, real competition for places," says Lt Cdr Ashton Jones. "I see this as a very healthy position for Navy Rugby to be in.

"The U23 skipper, Cowboy John, is putting pressure on Combined Services captain, Dave Pascoe for the number 9 shirt and this competition will intensify when Matt Rhodes returns from Norway.

"Similarly Scott Llewellyn's form for the Sharks suggests that Greg Barden will have to work hard to secure the outside centre's shirt; likewise HMS Lancaster's Wayne Duggan showed that he has pace and strength that is in many ways reminiscent of Josh Drauninui, and he also has a good kicking game.

"So all in all, selection meetings should be interesting and it is problems like these that I welcome having to resolve."

Selection decisions have been made easier by the availability of players – thanks to great flexibility from ships and units, notably the RM, HMS Bulwark and Argyll and 814 NAS, all of

whom have released players from deployment.
And before there can be any thought of beating the Army, the Air Force come to Burnaby Road on April 16 for what promises to be a rugby union gala. The veterans, women and 1st XV will all be in action.

Meanwhile, the U23 squad has a new face

the first female manager in RNRU. LPT Helen McClement (aka 'Hels Bels') has taken charge of the squad, ensuring players are released for matches by their units, have the right kit and are fully prepared for each fixture. And all this she has to do while also serving as HMS Westminster's clubz.

Fortunately, she can call on her experience as women's team manager from 2004-05.

On a more sombre note, a trust fund has been set up in memory of Royal Marine Craig Hodgkinson, who died whilst playing for the RN against Cornwall in November 2006.

The 27-year-old is believed to have died from an undetected heart disorder – prompting his family to form a trust which will hopefully spare other families the same tragedy.

They hope to raise awareness of the number

of young people who die from undiagnosed heart conditions (eight people under 35 every week in the UK), as well as supplying rugby clubs across the land with defibrillators.

Among the fund-raising efforts so far have been a 7s competition in the Falklands organised by LPT 'Topsy' Turner of HMS Southampton and a match between the RN and the Glasgow Hawks (Craig's former club), plus a large raffle.

Top prize was a Peugeot 107, won by HMS Kent's AB Lisa Burt, who collected the keys from RNRU Chairman Cdre Jim Patrick.

As for the trust fund, it stands well in excess

of £30,000 at present.
■ Tickets for the Twickenham clash are tickets for the Twickethiam clash are available via www.armynavymatch.org/ticket.htm, by calling 0870 4446633 or writing to Royal Navy Rugby Union, c/o Codest Orm House, Walton Rd, Farlington,

Hants, PO6 1TR. **Sand Wedges needed**

Question: What does a hard working staff officer in Baghdad get up to on Christmas Day?

Answer: Plays golf for the honour of the Senior Service. Yes, while you were opening your pressies and dreaming of turkey, Cdrs Simon Cole and John Gray (pictured, left, teeing off) and Lt Cdr Dave Bucknall grabbed their clubs for the Inter-Service Crossed Swords Championships

The Crossed-Swords course (so called as it's in the shadow of Baghdad's most famous landmark) is a par 3 pitch and putt created on open ground in the Iragi capital's International Zone.

Equipment has been donated by a number of donors including Ping and Jack Nicklaus, and the modest \$1 greens fee is collected for the Educational Trust Charity for dependants of service personnel

The fixture consisted of a round-robin contest of foursomes and

singles. Sadly, the RN were pipped into second place by the RAF on the final hole of the final match (but at least they didn't take home the wooden spoon, a dubious honour bestowed upon the Army).

Itchen to use your tackle?

AWAY from all the bump and grind of usual RN sport is Portsmouth Services Fly Fishing Association, looking to increase interest in the gentle pastime.

The chalk streams and rivers of Hampshire enjoy a reputation for providing some of the best trout fly fishing in the UK.

But this top-drawer fishing usually comes at a price that only the wealthy and well connected can afford.

Luckily, not all the rivers are controlled by city syndicates; the association has had access to several prime beats on the Rivers Itchen and Meon since 1949.

Membership is open to serving and retired officers and ratings/ other ranks of any Service, with priority going to those who are currently serving.

Annual membership costs a fraction of that for comparable clubs and gives access to 12 beats on the two rivers for dry fly and upstream nymph fishing. Both rivers hold wild brown

trout, with grayling in abundance on the Itchen. They are also stocked with keepable brown trout all spring and summer.

Details are available from Gerald Craig-McFeely on 01730

Limited numbers, lots of promise

HMS Collingwood played host to the RN 2007 judo

championships.

And despite limited numbers due to operational commitments, there were some very close bouts which demonstrated that RN judo possesses promise for the future.

Mne Chris Sherrington and Lt Mark Shaw have recently taken medals at the British Trials and been selected for the GB Judo Squad.

In the team event, the Royal Marines came out worthy winners over the RN in a very competitive

Individual performances of note included AB Crowe (HMS Collingwood) earning a bronze after just three weeks of regular judo. AET D Clark was still in basic training at HMS Raleigh but was allowed to take a break in training to attend, gaining silver and bronze medals.

More details on the sport are available from www.rnjudo.com

U81 Kg kyu grade: Gold – Mne Crosby (RM Poole), **silver** – LAEA Chris McGurk (HMS Sultan) U73 Kg kyu grade: Gold - CPO Emery (Sultan), silver – AB Stocker (Collingwood), bronze – AB Crowe (Collingwood)

Dan Grade: Gold – Mne Martin
(RM Poole), silver – AET Clark (Raleigh), bronze – LAEA McGurk and Mne Miller(RM Poole)

Masters: Gold - CPO John Thacker (AFCO Shrewsbury), silver Peter Powell (Collingwood) Open: Gold - Mne Chris Sherrington, silver – Mne Martin, bronze – AET Clark and Mne

Kayak with the Kiwis

A 12-strong team will be heading spring for Kayak NZ 2009, a major sporting/adventurous training around the coast of the North Island Most of the three-week

expedition will be spent sea kayaking, but there will also be a chance to paddle a river, plus surfing and canoe polo.

The exped is likely to run between February 8 and the beginning of March and will be run by two ex-RN sailors now serving with the RNZN and a chap from Wellington Canoe Club.

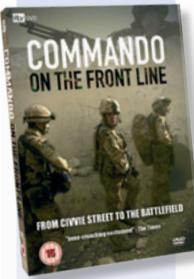
The cost of the trip is still being calculated, but it's likely to he part-funded by the RN Sports Lottery and AT funds.

Details are available from Lt Cdr Ioe Wood on 9380 25623.





'Much blood will flow' the Kaiser's **Battle and** the Royal **Naval Division**



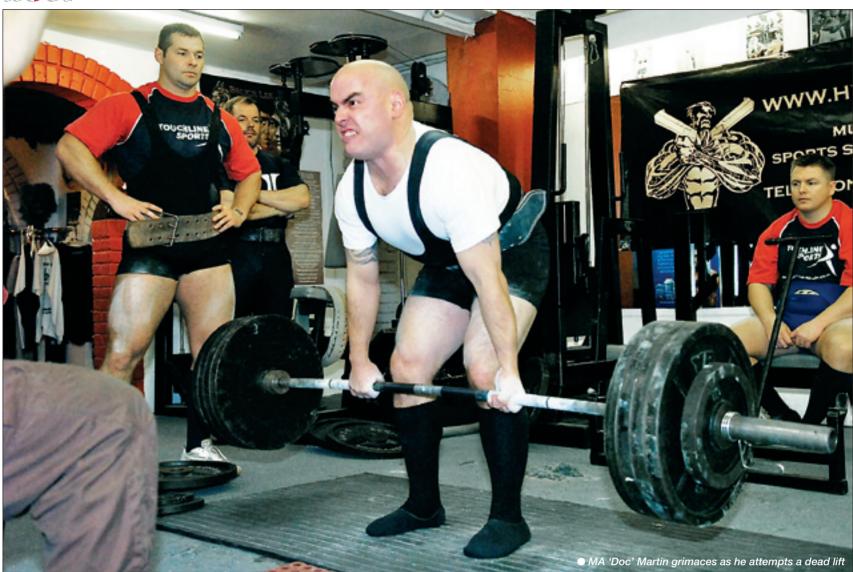
Go Commando in your lounge - 20 **DVDs** to win

Plus

The Ensign and the **Cross - with** the Orion task force in Malta







Oars for good

A TEAM of 13 rowers from the Indoor section of the RNRM Amateur Rowing Association entered this year's British Indoor Rowing Championships (BIRC), at Birmingham's National Indoor Arena.

The event, in its 17th year, attracted a record entry of 3,203 competitors, aged between ten and 84.

Races are 'rowed' on identical Concept

2 Rowing Machines and take place over a virtual 2,000m course, with progress shown on a large screen behind the competitors.

Several Royal Navy rowers are veterans of the event, but this year the team included a number of novice rowers.

Notable performances included those of this year's RN men's champion, Shaun Hickson RM (7th in the men's 35-39 race), CWEM(R) Steve Card, in only his second race, finished 6th, and LLogs Damian Spreckley (HMS Ocean) came 29th in the men's open race. against several members of the GB Olympic rowing team and many of the nation's elite rowers.

However, the performance of the day was from Lt Cdr Neil McMullan RN.

Lt Cdr McMullan, returning to competitive indoor rowing after a break of three years, won the national silver medal in the 35-39 age category; his lung-busting time of 6m 4.8s, as well as being a personal best, was the 19th fastest time of the day – beating several GB squad and Oxford/Cambridge boat race crew members.

"I'd been training hard for this race over the last few months and I was delighted with both a personal best and the silver medal," said Neil. "I am now turning my focus to the World Championships in February, where I hope to continue improving my performance.

Just days later in Dresden at the European

championships, the officer shaved four tenths of a second of his Birmingham time to take bronze in the men's 30-39 age category.

WO Paul Winton, in the 50-plus age category, continued his run of solid performances with a 6th place finish, in a time several seconds faster than his BIRC race.

It is hoped that the RN will be able to field a crew of up to 12 sailors and marines in the World Indoor Rowing Championships in Boston, USA, towards the end of website www.navy.rowing.org.uk or Lt Kev Anderson on 9380 28774.

The association offers three boathouses, a large number of boats and coaching facilities for both indoor and on-water rowers and is actively seeking novice and returning rowers, wet and dry, for the forthcoming indoor, head



Worth the weight

RN **POWERLIFTERS** raised the bar – and expectations – at the Inter-Services

Championships.
With only six weeks to prepare, the scratch RN team ran experienced sides – containing several GB International lifters extremely close, finally being narrowly beaten by the Army and National Police 1st teams and finishing an extremely creditable 3rd overall.

In all, eight teams from the police, Army, RN and RAF entered the competition at Hercules Gym in Colchester, organised by the Army Power lifting Union (APU) and licensed by the British Drugs Free Powerlifting Association (RDEPA) Association (BDFPA).

The team was managed by Lt Cdr Simon Wynn by Lt Cdr Simon Wynn
(100kg) and consisted of
three lifters LPT Sean Cole
(team captain) (67.5kg), Mne
Mark Flemming (75kg) and
MA Doc Martin (90kg).

All four RN representatives
lifted well beyond

expectation.

Lt Cdr Simon Wynn bench pressed a massive 162.5kg (358lb) - the biggest lift in that discipline during the competition.

The biggest surprise of the day, for the opposition was Mne Mark Flemming who lifted a massive 597.5kg (1,317) over all three lifts - breaking the BDFPA record in the process and winning the 'lifter of the tournament'

As a result of the standards set by the RN lifters as individuals, they all qualified to compete in the British Nationals in June.

For those not acquainted with this sport, powerlifting is distinct from weightlifting, Continued on page 47

Oar indoors... (I-r) WO1 Paul Winton, Lt Cdr Neil McMullan, Lts Kev Anderson and Gary Beels